

COME TO
MY BIRTHDAY
PARTY







Happy Birthdays should be as happy for mothers, as they are for children. This book is designed to help you give birthday parties that are memorable, fun and easy. Best of all, each party has been "child tested." To the ingenious mothers who designed these parties, our sincere thanks for sharing their ideas.

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Mother Goose is loose

DECORATIONS

The best part is an easy-to-make balloon tree, which really wows the children. Here's how to make it: Make a heavy cardboard cone (poster paper is good for this) by cutting a small pie-wedge out of a 16-18 inch circle, then staple the sides together. Make



small holes in the cone, and attach blown-up balloons to the cone by pushing the little knots into the holes in the cone. Set the cone aside while you place a broom, bristles down in a waste basket and bank it in tightly with newspapers. Cover the broom handle with crepe paper and scotch tape it at the top. Now take the balloon cone and place it over the broom handle. Put some balloons at the bottom of the tree to cover the paper. It's done — a balloon tree.

You can, if you want, draw with a felt-tip marking pen a nursery rhyme character on each balloon.

The only other decorations needed would be cut-outs of nursery rhyme characters on napkins, place cards and perhaps the cups to help carry out the Mother Goose theme.

For favors, you could get a little sandpail for each child and call them Jack and Jill's



pails. They could be filled, partially, with candy and gum, and a couple of deflated balloons.

ACTIVITIES

If the little guests are really little, they will prefer hearing Mother Goose music on a record and just listening and looking around. (Funny how they hate to be organized!) If they're slightly older, say five or six, they'll love to do a charade game. Have each guest act out a Mother Goose rhyme without speaking. The others have to guess what it is. There's no prize for this one — just a good thing to do while everyone arrives.



Next, you could do a version of Pin the Tail on the Donkey, only pin some mittens on a kitten drawn on a poster.

London Bridge, of course, is a natural for this party — but you'll find it gets a bit wild, with six-year-olds. The way to calm them down is to open presents. Then they'll be ready for refreshments.



REFRESHMENTS

As they get ready to eat, you give each child a paper character from Mother Goose. Tell him he must match the character to his own lunch sack, which can be tied to a bush or tree. (If the guests are very young, have them match Humpty Dumpty with Humpty Dumpty on their sack. If older, have them match Miss Muffet with a spider, Jack with Jill, A Cat with a Fiddle, etc.)

Inside each sack is a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, cut into animal shapes, celery and carrot sticks, a dixie cup filled with ice cream and a cup cake. (You may have to hand out the dixie cups after the sack lunches are consumed!) After the meal, have each guest pick a balloon off the balloon tree to play with until time to go home.

"Four, five and six year olds can recite Mother Goose better than you and I can, usually. Here's a party that gives them a chance to use their skill, and enjoy characters they know all about."
Mrs. Jean Stringfellow
4-7 years

INVITATIONS

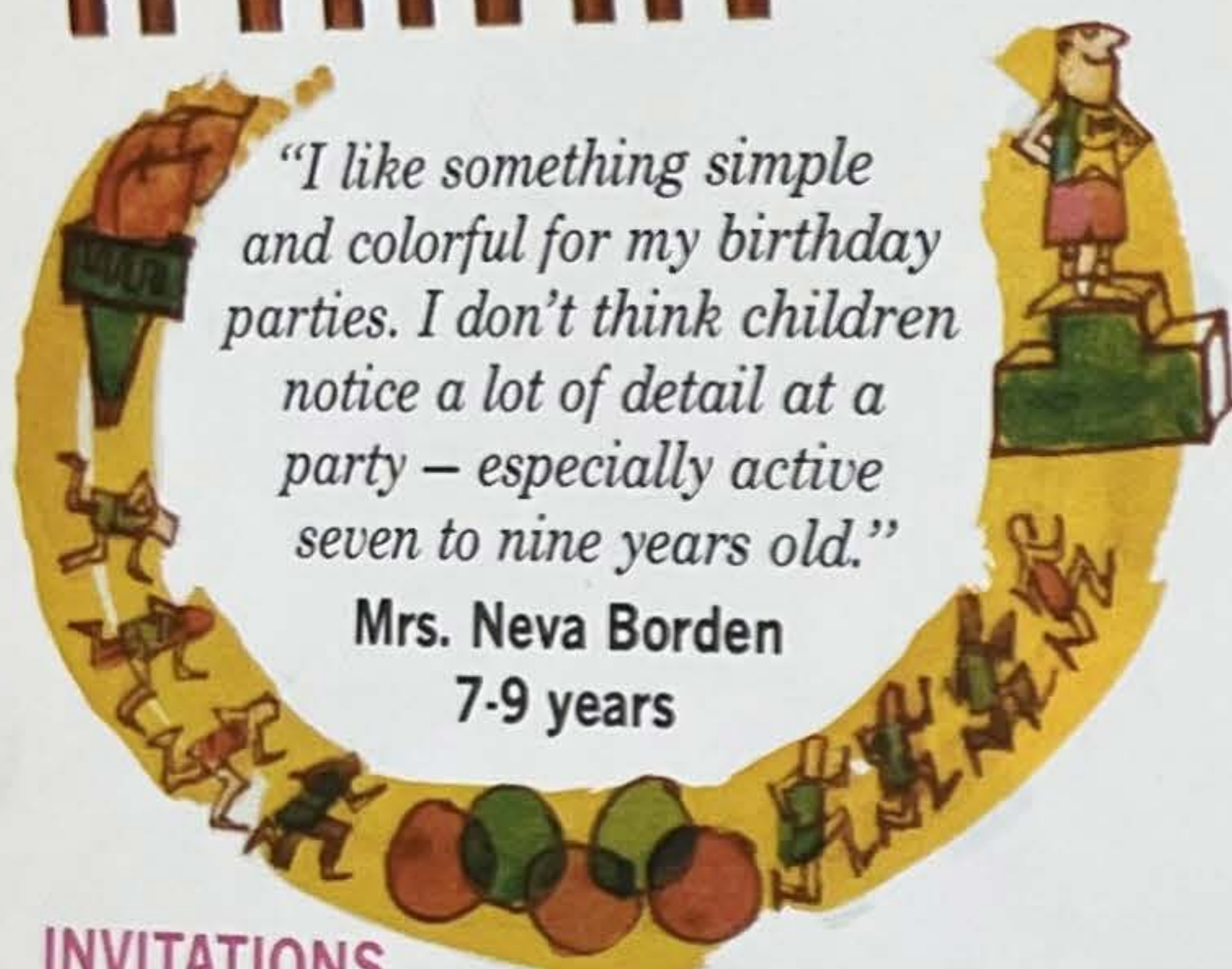
Trace a small Mother Goose pattern onto colored or white construction paper. Fill in the details and color her hat and ribbons. (You can find lots of patterns in your nur-



sery rhyme book or coloring book.) Then on her back write a poem such as: Folks from Mother Goose's land, Think that parties are just grand. So we hope that you can come, Join Miss Muffet and Tom Thumb. And give date, time and place.



INDOOOLYMPICS



"I like something simple and colorful for my birthday parties. I don't think children notice a lot of detail at a party — especially active seven to nine years old."

Mrs. Neva Borden
7-9 years

INVITATIONS

On light construction paper draw replicas of the American flag (let your birthday child help color). On the back of each flag, put time and place information and be sure to add "Come to the Indoor Olympic Games."



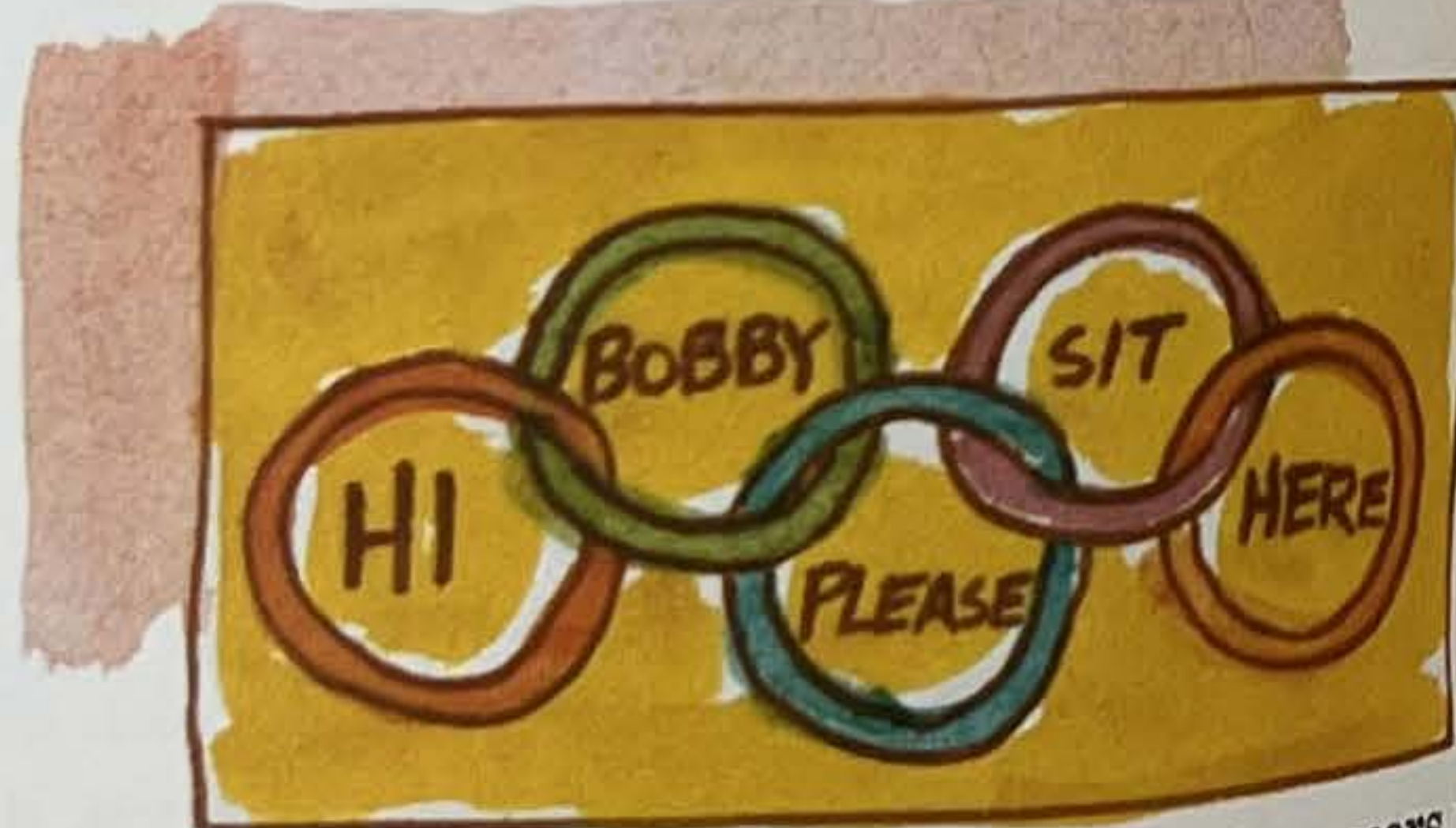
DECORATIONS:

From the encyclopedia I copied flags of other countries onto typing paper and made a family project out of coloring them. (With more money and less time, I could have

bought little flags of cloth at the dime store. You can place them anywhere you want for decoration. I hung them from crepe paper streamers — four of them — taped close together at the ceiling, and then streaming



— twisted — to each corner of the dining room table. You can use any colors — I used red, white and blue. I personally feel strongly about keeping our tradition of placing the American flag higher than the others.



A plain white paper tablecloth covers the table. For placecards cut a design of the five Olympic Circles (from cardboard or colored paper), paste them together — overlapping a bit — then write on each circle, "Hi-Bobby (or whatever the name) - please-sit-here."

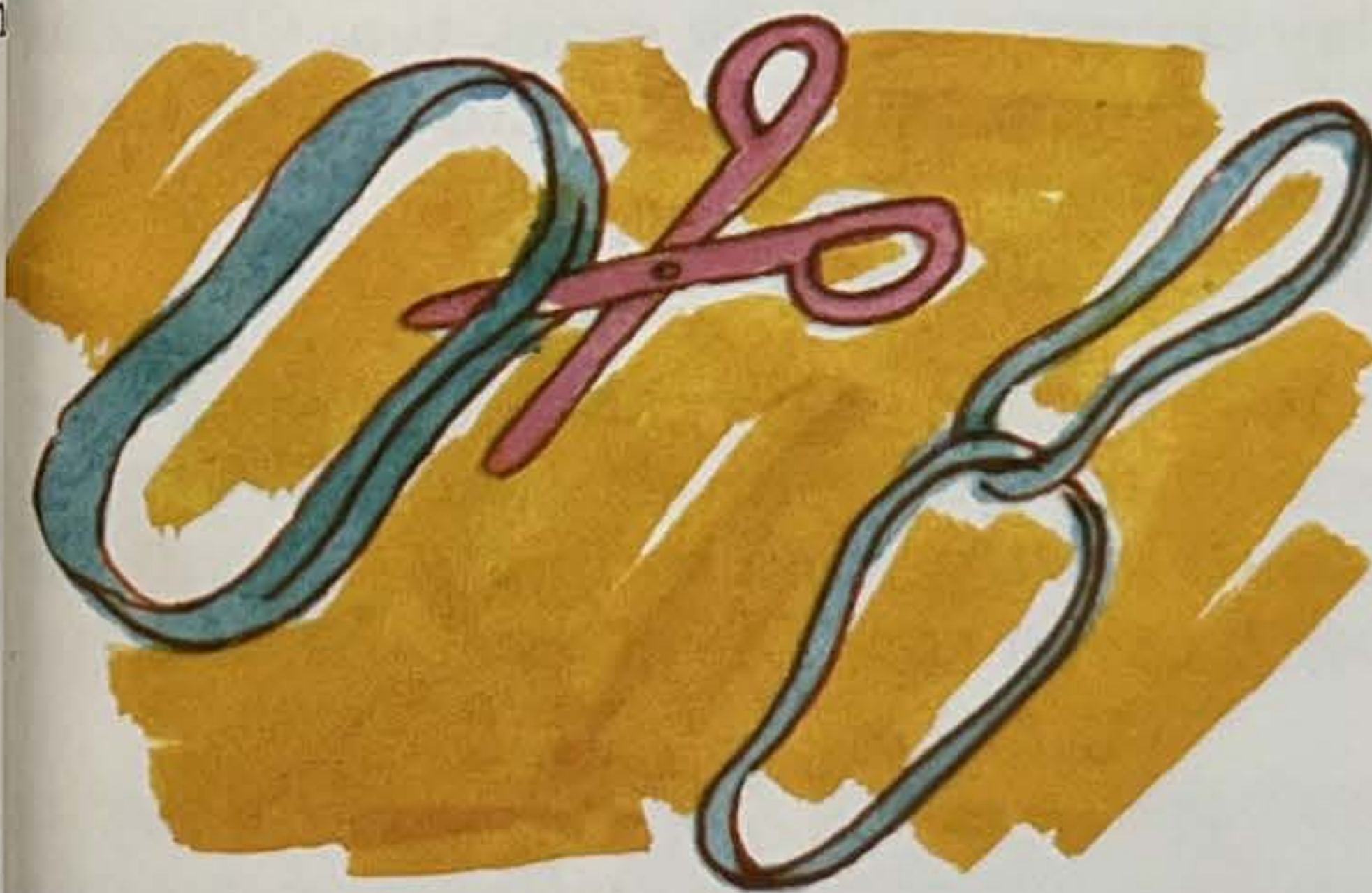
ACTIVITIES

For prizes, make medals from cardboard (cut about the size of a half dollar) covered

with gold and silver foil. The gold and silver are easy — but finding a bronze-looking paper takes some doing. You might consider hand-



ing out cute ribbons instead — blue for first, red for second, etc. Or you might buy small amounts of gold, silver and bronze paint and paint the tops of milk bottles, then add ribbon streamers.



These games are good for seven to nine year olds. First "Cut A Runner." Before the party, cut newspaper strips so that they'll be about 2 to 3 inches wide and three feet long. Tape the ends together after twisting some of the strips once, some twice, some not at all. Give each child a strip and a pair of scissors. The fastest runner is the one who cuts down the center of the ring to completion first. The fun of the game is that some

will end up with one huge ring, others with two separate rings, and still others with two joined rings, depending on the "twists" in their strips. They enjoy the surprise.

"Swallow Swimmer" — This is simple. Place glasses full of water in front of the children and give them each a teaspoon. The first to spoon down the water (drinking from the spoon) wins. You can use a stop watch in this event to record the times of each winner and then award the gold medal to the one with the fastest swallowing time.



For the "Shot Put" use two small-mouth quart jars and lima beans. Each guest gets 10 lima beans. Taking turns and standing on a chair above the jar, they drop as many of their beans into the jar as possible. Time and accuracy both count. The child getting the most beans into the jar in the shortest time wins.

REFRESHMENTS

Hot soup and sandwiches served with milk come first. Then I served the birthday cake with candles and little flags on it. As I say, it was simple but the children really enjoyed it.



A Day on the Farm



DECORATIONS

This is very simple: just place your children's stuffed animals about the room to represent farm animals. Four-year olds will love this. You can have your child cut some more farm scenes from magazines and display



play them around the room, too. Children this age miss a lot of detail, so the hard work is usually gone to waste for you, unless you love doing it.

Your birthday cake can be the centerpiece. I baked one in the shape of a bunny, frosted it white, and sprinkled coconut on top, but you could have a cake with farm



animals on top — most bakeries furnish these separately or as part of a cake for you. After

each child's place, you could have the start of a tomato plant, planted in a simple tin can painted a bright color. You might want to put the child's name on the can, and that would also serve as his placecard, too.

ACTIVITIES

Fish is the favorite game of four-year olds: one can win a prize by merely sticking a pole over a blanket or sheet, which is hung between two chairs or two trees. Mother is behind the blanket pinning the prizes to the



string with a clothespin. Prizes can be farm animals bought at the five and dime store, but a better thought might be a miniature hoe, shovel, and rake all tied together with twine (all these also available at variety stores). Then when the children go home, they each have a start of a tomato plant which they can plant with their little tools. I think fish is all four-year olds like to play and I don't organize them any more than that, but you might want to play 'Ring Around the Rosy' or something else simple

until time for refreshments. Opening presents



first saves you time later, for you can be tidying up while the children are eating.



REFRESHMENTS

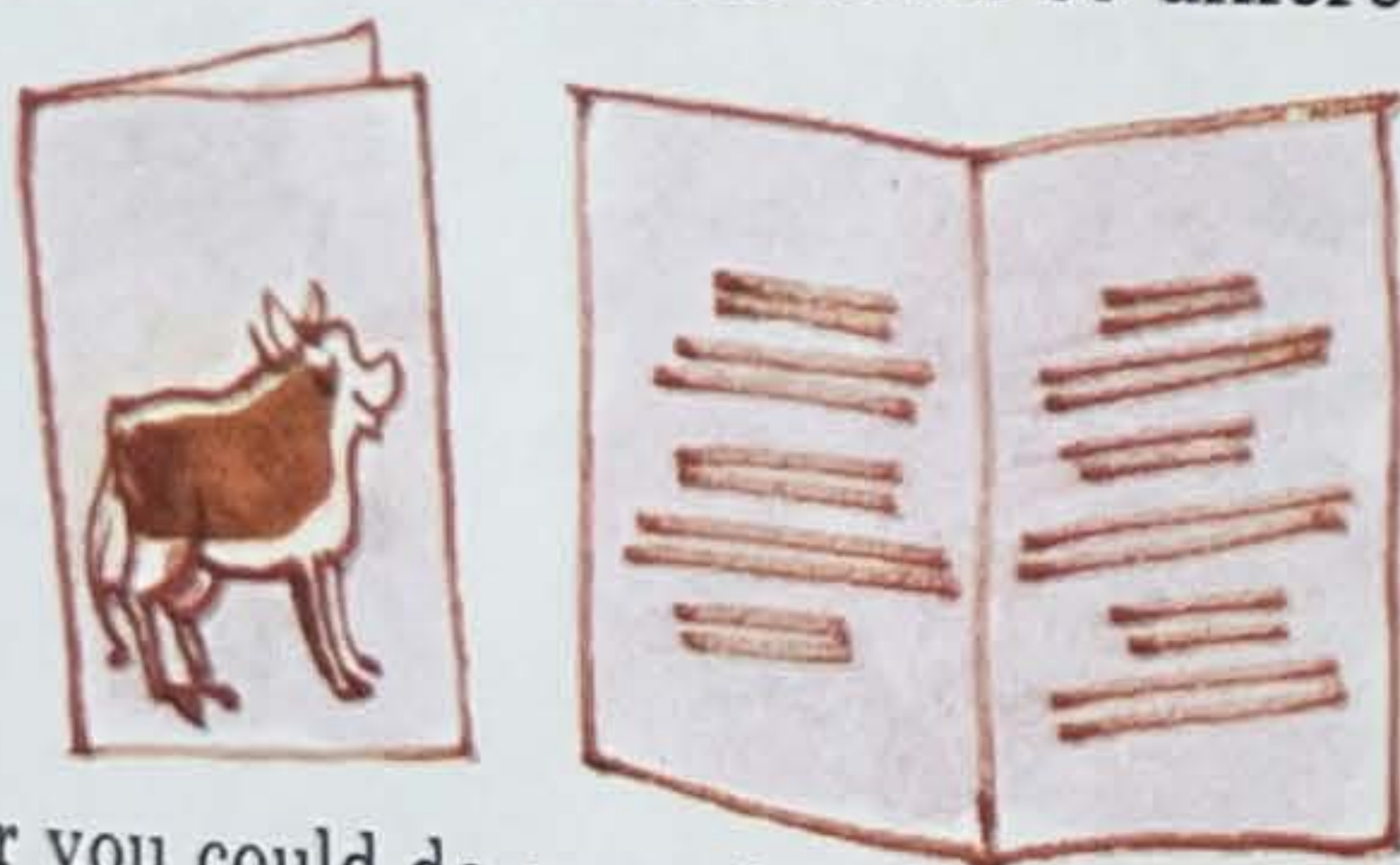
The refreshments are fun and your child will love to help you with these before the party. You make open faced tuna or peanut butter sandwiches and cut them into animal shapes with cookie cutters. (Better to make the topping after pattern is cut.) Serve with milk, potato chips and carrot sticks. Then serve the birthday cake and ice cream. After refreshments, let the children play with the new presents until time to go home.

"This is an ideal party for a four-year old girl or boy. The child gets to help on the preparation, and as we all know, anticipation is half the fun."

Mrs. Duane Rowberry
4 years

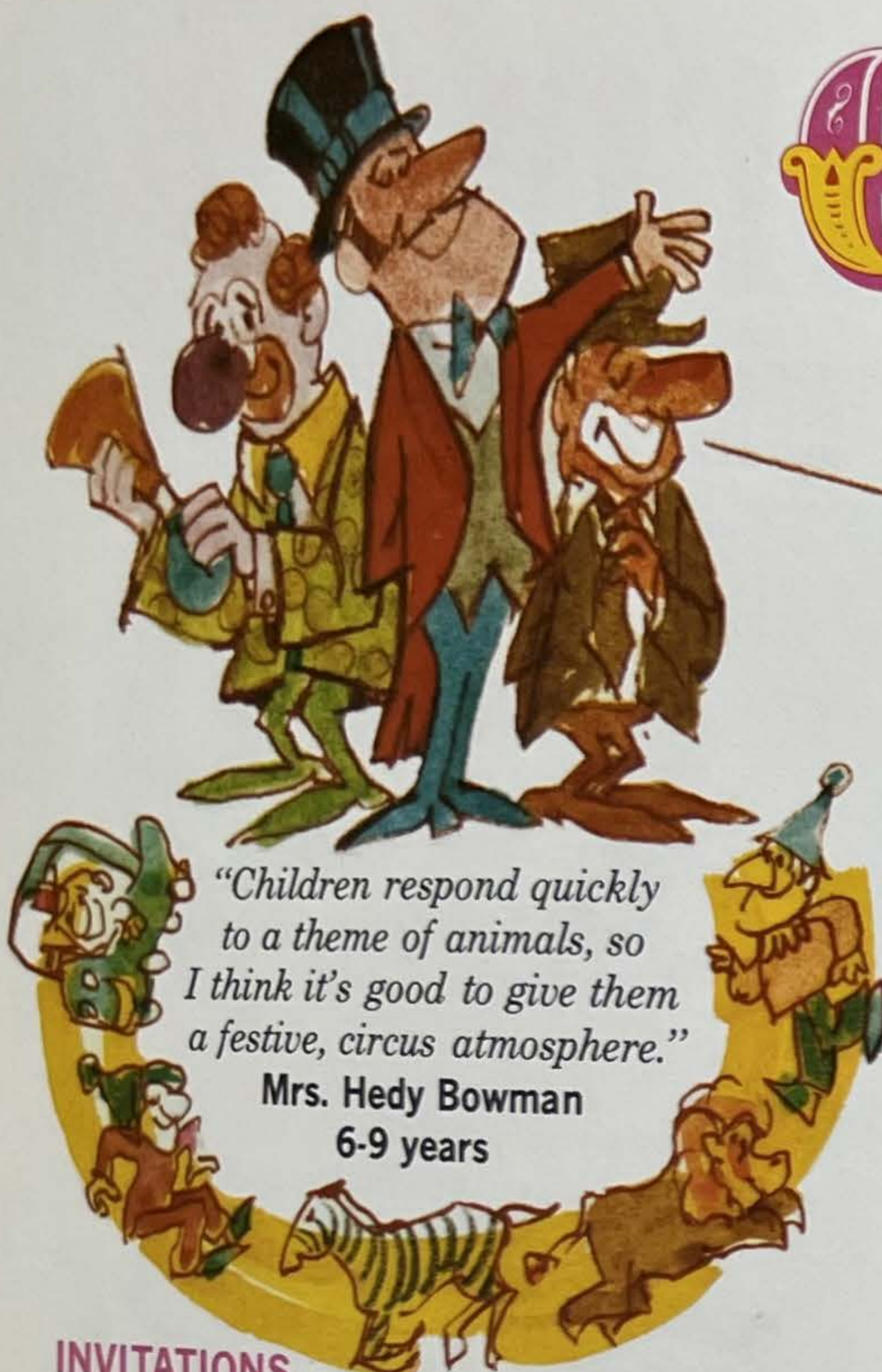
INVITATIONS

You and your child can make these out of construction paper — just squares of it, folded over, with a picture cut from a magazine glued on the front. You can find farm animals and each invitation could be different,



or you could do as we did — have Mommy draw a bunny on the front and then let the child glue a little cotton tail on each one. Inside, we wrote a poem:

*I'm having a birthday; won't you
please come?
Wear your play clothes, so you can
have fun.
The time is; the place is
Lunch will be served.*



"Children respond quickly to a theme of animals, so I think it's good to give them a festive, circus atmosphere."

Mrs. Hedy Bowman
6-9 years

INVITATIONS

Coloring books hold a wealth of patterns for invitations. I cut a duck, bird, or animal from a page and trace it onto colored construction paper. My children help cut these out and sketch in eyes, wings and other details. Place a little note under a wing or in a paw telling the date, time and place, and send the little notes on their way.



DECORATIONS

If you have walls on which you don't mind using tape, you can cut out colored circles, large and small, to represent balloons. Tape

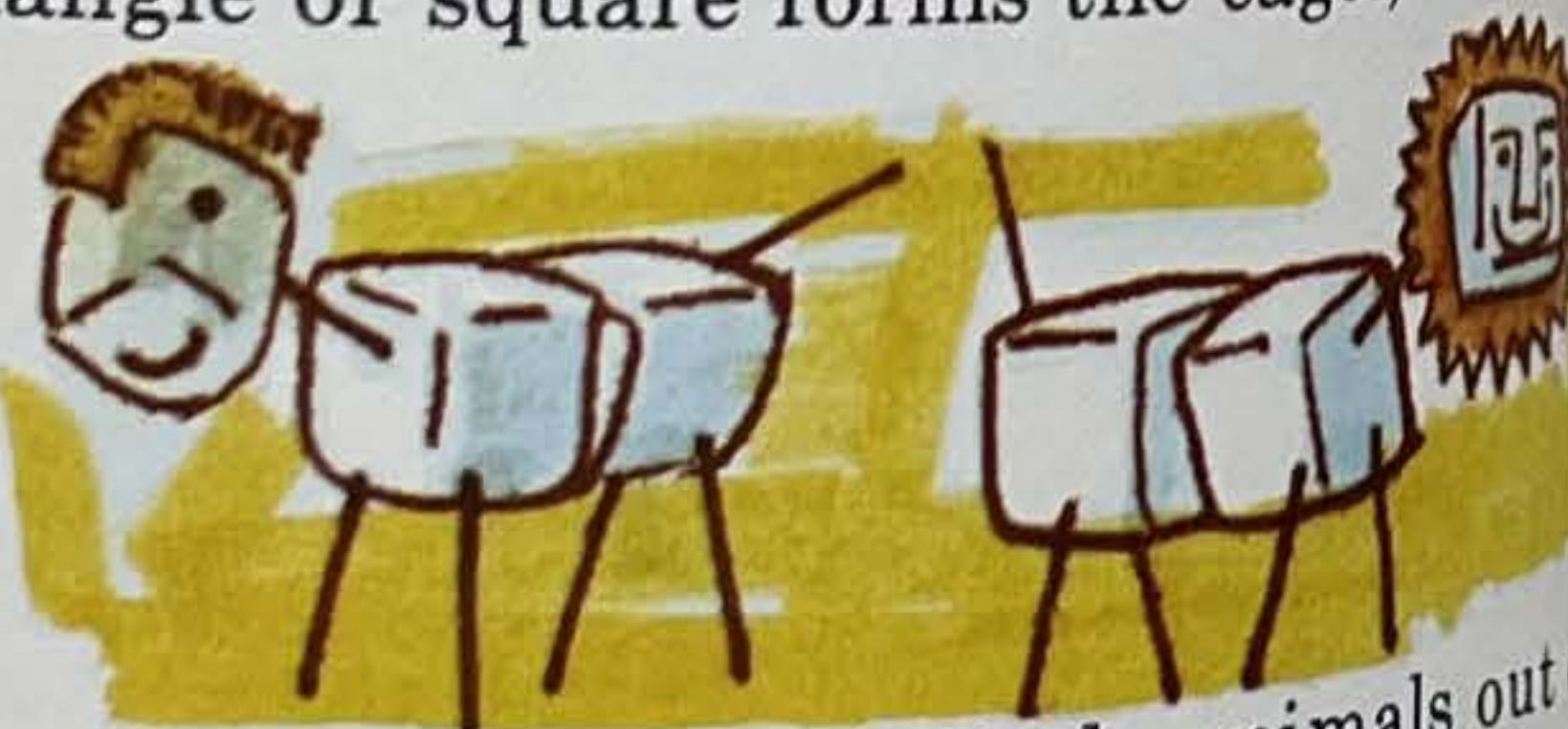
CIRCUS

strings on the back and group together your wall to suggest a balloon vender's war



You can add real balloons elsewhere — either hanging down from strings taped to the ceiling, bunched in a laundry basket, or the en masse to the back of a chair.

Then I made paper animals in cages and taped them to the wall. (The same process of tracing and cutting can be used here.) Strips of black construction paper over the animals make realistic bars — and a colored triangle or square forms the cage.)



For favors I made little animals out of marshmallows. Place two marshmallows together with toothpicks. Cut out manes (for lions) tails, ears, trunks (elephants) and paws from colored construction paper to fit marshmallow. You can make little faces on each by dipping a toothpick in food coloring and drawing eyes, nose and mouth.

I think the younger children love to have a little costume to wear. So if your party

DAY



for someone six or less, you might want to try these easy circle aprons: cut an 8-inch circle of heavy paper or cardboard for head, and a 12-inch circle for the body. Add ears and feet, then draw faces with crayons or magic markers. Attach 12-inch ribbons (4 of them) to ears and sides of bodies. These will tie around the child.



ACTIVITIES

Depending on the age of your guests, these can be fairly simple to very organized. Favorites at our house are "Balloon Relay." For this, divide the children into two teams. Put a chair for each team at the end of the back yard. Each child is given an inflated balloon, runs down to the chair and sits on the balloon until it pops. The child runs back, shouts the name of an animal to his next team-mate in line, who repeats the action. First team to finish wins.

And for something different, try "Animal Hide-and-Seek." Choose animal patterns four or five inches in length. (Again, these can be found in your trusty coloring book!) Cut out 50 or 60, depending on the number of guests, and hide them throughout a cer-

tain area (you can do this inside or outside). Set a time limit, and give a prize to the child finding the most animals.

REFRESHMENTS

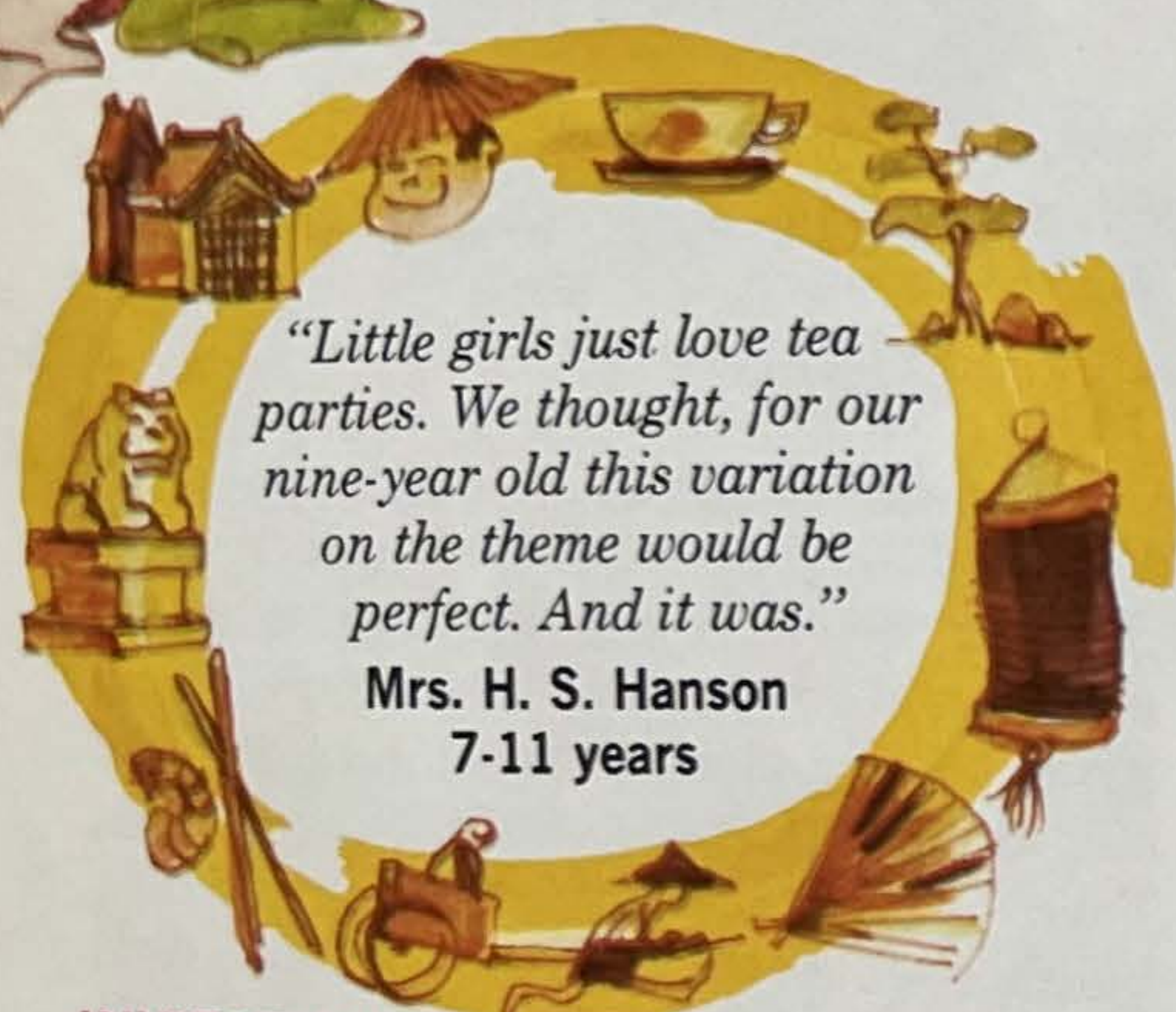
You can go to that coloring book again for more animal patterns, this time fairly small — about two inches high. Trace and cut them, adding details yourself. Now buy red and white striped plastic straws and some cake mix. Bake and frost a two-layer round cake. Tape animals to the straws at different heights — leaving (at least) one-inch from top of straw. Place straws around cake to look like a carousel. Make a red circle a bit larger than the cake, cut a 2-inch pie wedge out of it, then tape the ends together to form the top of your carousel. The cake can be your centerpiece.



If you serve punch, tape more animals to those straws and stick them in the punch.

Each child will go home with a bean bag, balloon, and marshmallow favor, and the memory of a wonderful party.

JAPANESE DOLL FESTIVAL



"Little girls just love tea parties. We thought, for our nine-year old this variation on the theme would be perfect. And it was."

Mrs. H. S. Hanson
7-11 years

INVITATIONS

Make your own invitations out of yellow construction paper, shaped to look like Japanese lanterns. Draw the lines in India ink to make it look authentic. Besides telling the time and place of the party, ask each girl to bring along her favorite doll.



DECORATIONS

We confine our decorations to one room. Three paper lanterns (from the dime store) look very attractive on a string at one end of the room. To make our table as authentic

as possible, we got a 4 x 8 piece of plywood and put it on concrete blocks about one foot off the floor. The girls sat on the carpet Japanese style and loved it. (If you have enough cushions or toss pillows, this would be even better.)



We couldn't find an appropriate pink paper table cloth at the store, so we decided to make one out of pink tissue paper, folded double. It sounds quite fragile, but actually worked beautifully. To decorate the large table we made our own Japanese Cherry Trees out of small bare tree branches. We popped popcorn and tinted it pink (with dry tempera powder from our local art supply store), and glued the kernels to the branches.



You'll need a pot to hold the branches up right, or your husband can make a wooden base if you can get him interested in the project.

ACTIVITIES

Girls in the 7-11 age group don't require the strenuous activities that boys do. Even Tom-boys like a dress-up party, and are quite content to amuse themselves without tearing your house apart. The first game we played was drop the clothes pins, an ordinary game and not exactly in keeping with our theme.



(The object is simply to see who can get the most pins in from standing height.) All I can tell you is that the girls enjoyed it, and there's no mess.



We asked each of the guests to bring her favorite doll and had a doll-judging contest. Our daddy was the judge and he gave prizes for the oldest, prettiest, most unusual, and so on, remembering to find some "best" award for every girl to avoid any hurt feel-

ings. We gave all the winners Japanese wind chimes (which like everything else are available in the dime store).

Then we divided the girls up into teams of two, giving each team five or six sheets of brightly colored tissue paper, pins, and scotch tape. Each team had to fashion a Japanese costume on each other. This took quite a long time and the girls loved every minute.



REFRESHMENTS

Chicken-fried rice (without onions), shrimp salad, celery and carrot sticks, hot rolls and butter, weak green tea with sugar (served from a Japanese tea set makes a delightful lunch). For dessert I make Cherry Festival



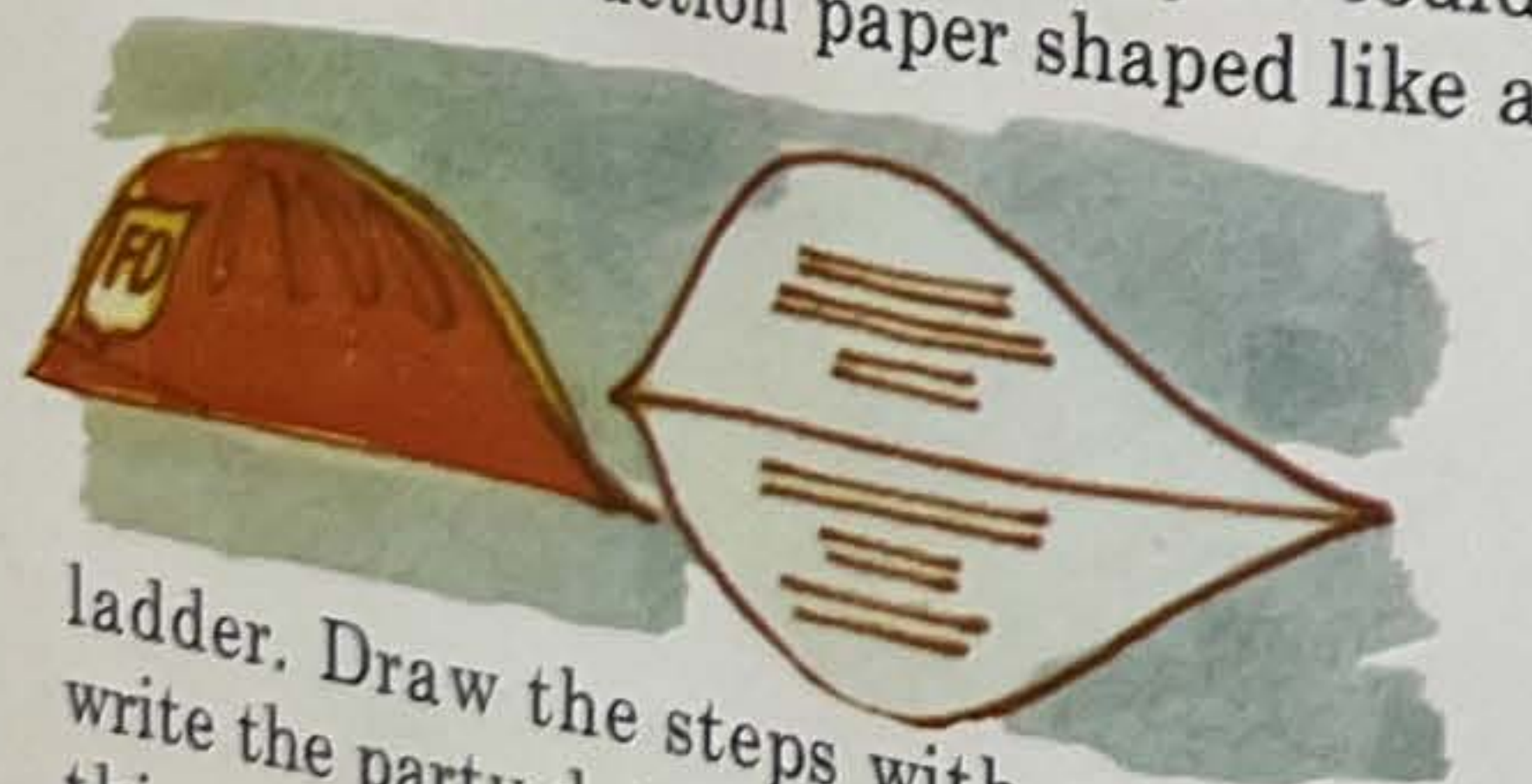
Cake (any pink tinted cake with pink frosting would be good), strawberry ice cream, and fortune cookies (we lifted these from the Chinese, but no matter — the little girls were delighted).

HOOK AND LADDER PARTY



INVITATIONS

Fireman invitations are available in many stationery stores, but we made our own by cutting out fireman shaped hats (which I traced from a coloring book). Or you could use white construction paper shaped like a



ladder. Draw the steps with crayon, and write the party details on the back. And for this party, maybe you should suggest the guests wear play clothes.

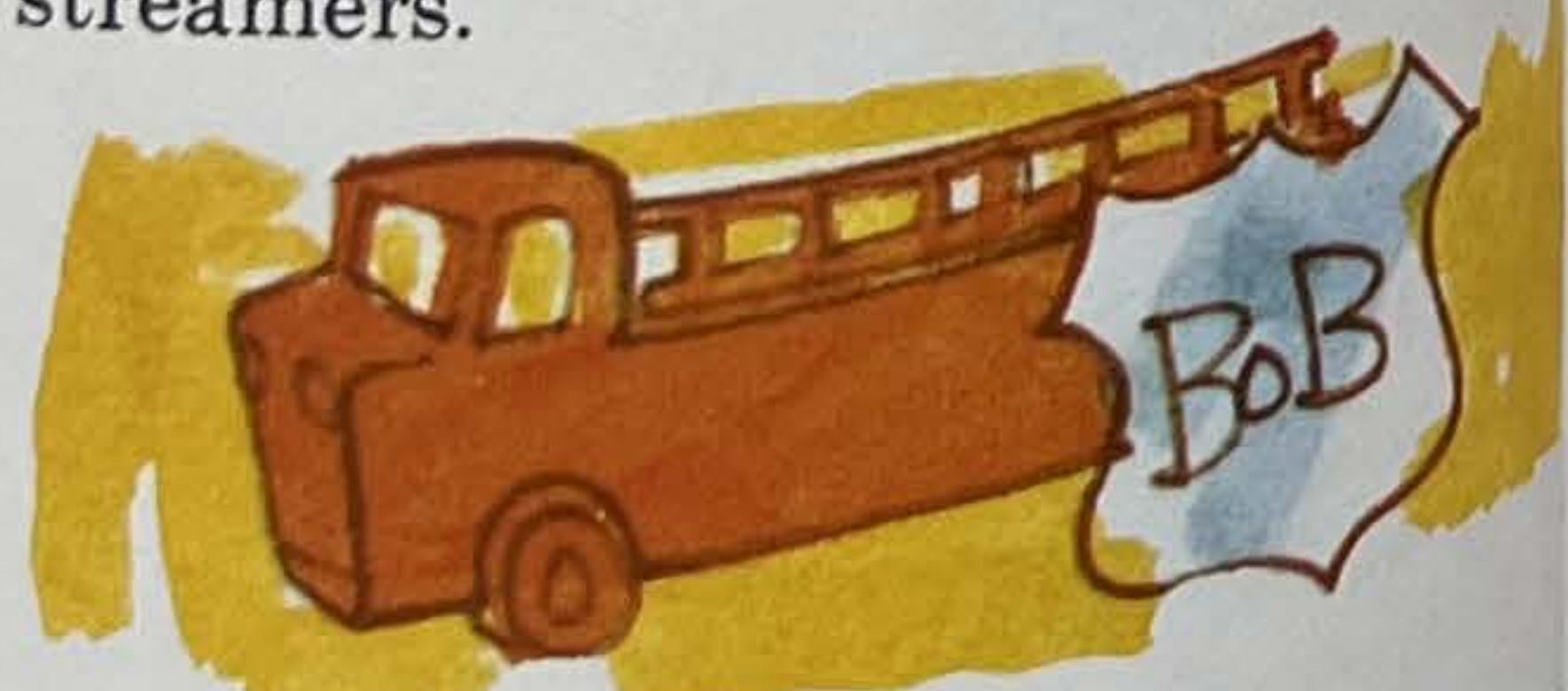
DECORATIONS

A toy fire truck makes a cute centerpiece if you make it very clear to the birthday child that he gets to keep it after the party. Red and white paper plates, cups and



kins carry out the color scheme. If you want more elaborate decorations, cut smaller fireman hats from construction paper and glue them on the cups and napkins.

Small fire engines from the dime store make good favors, and I placed these at each place, along with a fireman badge cut from foil with each guest's name. (When we got to the table we pinned these on to wear for the rest of the party.) If you think you need more elaborate decorations, then add red balloons and, red and white crepe paper streamers.



ACTIVITIES

While small boys are usually not good "team players," simple competitive games

are possible and fun. A real variation we enjoyed is "Bucket Brigade." Divide the guests into two teams and line them up about six feet apart. (You'll probably be happier if you take this game outside.) Fill a light plas-



tic scrub bucket about half full of water. The object is for one child to take the bucket and run with it to the next and so on without spilling the water. (If space is at a premium, he could carry it across the room or around the line before giving it to the next child.) The first team to bring the bucket back to the front of the line wins.



"Fireman Save My Child" is another game which is best outside, or in a basement or other area where a little spilled water won't hurt. You need a stop watch, a small step ladder, several candles, a squirt gun, a bucket of water for refills and a doll. Put a candle on the ground between the front and back of the ladder. The guests take turns squirt-



ing out the flame with the squirt gun, then running to the ladder and rescuing the doll, which is resting on top of the ladder. This is a time contest, and the child who is fastest in the squirting and rescue operation wins. (If the children are small and you don't want them climbing the ladder, put the doll on one of the steps within easy reach.)

"Fireman Fromky's New Suspenders" is a good "calming down" activity before refreshments. Draw a pair of suspenders on white construction or butcher paper, and give each child his own pair — to color and decorate as he pleases. If you give prizes for this, you can reward the funniest, most colorful, most original, neatest, etc. so everyone wins something.

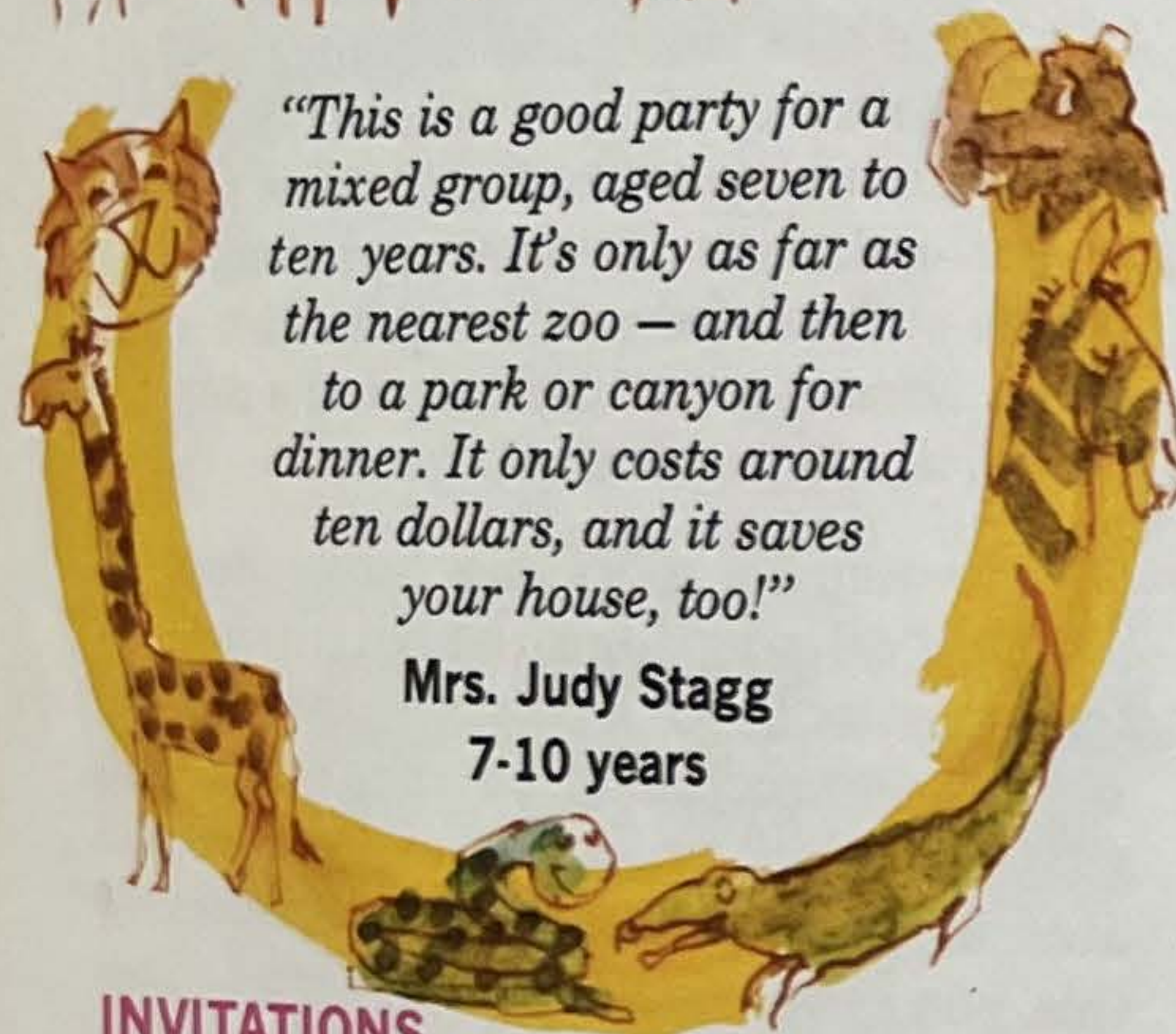


REFRESHMENTS

If your child likes red icing, let your cake resemble a fireman's hat by adding rectangular pieces of cake to a round one. Put a foil badge or other appropriate decoration on the front, or top. I carried the red color theme throughout with red candy, ice cream and punch. If this seems like too much of a good thing, try vanilla ice cream with a bright red maraschino cherry on top.



afRICan safari hunt



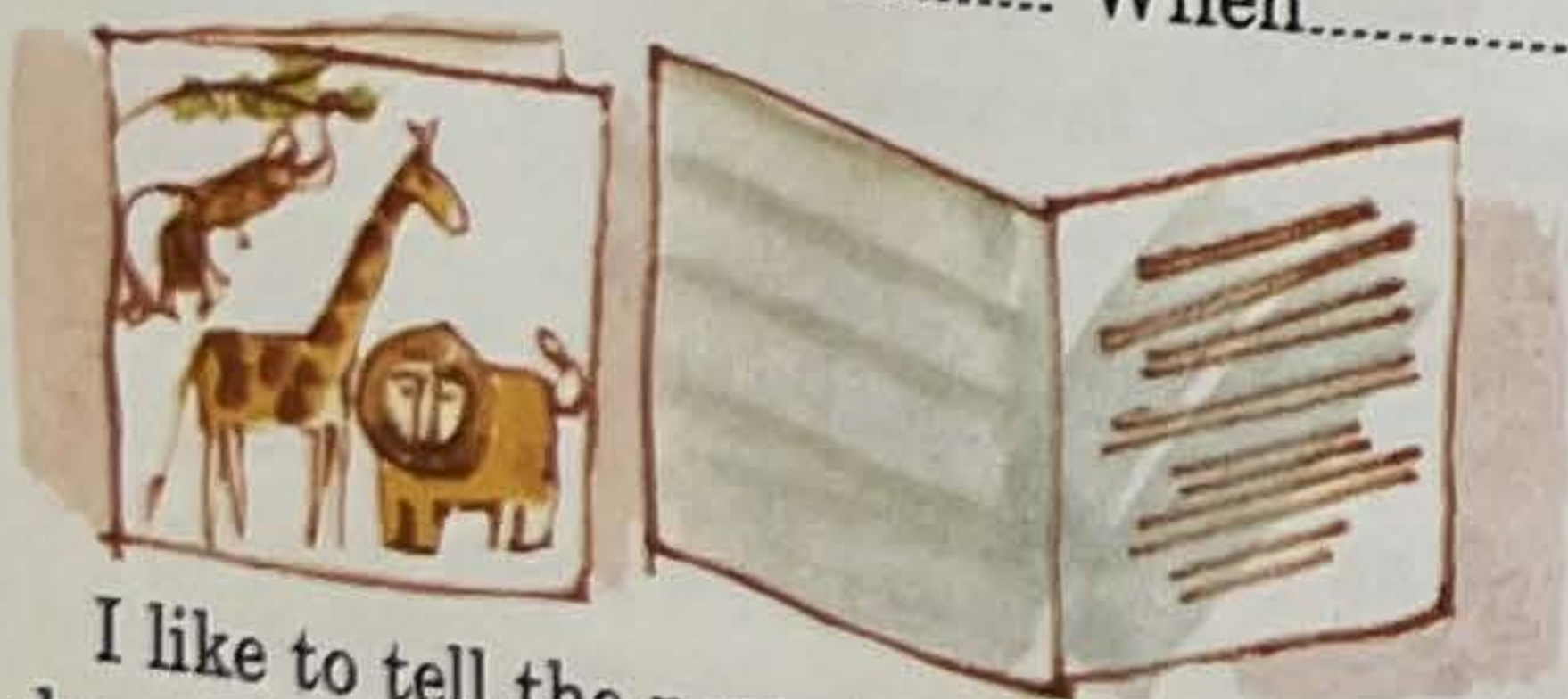
"This is a good party for a mixed group, aged seven to ten years. It's only as far as the nearest zoo — and then to a park or canyon for dinner. It only costs around ten dollars, and it saves your house, too!"

Mrs. Judy Stagg
7-10 years

INVITATIONS

Draw or trace various animal shapes from a coloring book. Have your child color them. Write a poem on the inside. Mine read: "We're going on an African Safari Hunt, Would you like to come? The animals we'll see are captured so you won't need to run. It's my birthday so it will be great if you can come."

Who..... Where..... When.....



I like to tell the parents whether the children will be fed dinner or not — and in this

case, they definitely will. Add a note at the bottom of the invitation that the party will begin and end at your house, but that you'll be going to the zoo and the canyon or park for dinner, so the parents will know.



DECORATIONS

You can provide each child with his own safari hat, available at your local dime store or novelty shop for about 30¢. As each child arrives at your house, give him a hat to wear — that's all the decoration you'll need — for this party is all outdoors.



ACTIVITIES

Load the children and the food into your car (you may want a friend to help, or just Daddy and his car may be enough) and drive to the zoo for the beginning of the expedition.

Leave the food in the car, and explore the whole zoo together for an hour or so.

After the safari, everybody gets back into the car and starts for the canyon. By the time you arrive, everyone will be very hungry. It's good to get all the children into the act by letting them help carry food, fire materials, etc. to the camp site, and having one group set the table while another group gets the food ready. After dinner, a good way to gather everyone together for the trip home is to open the gifts at the end of the party.



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REFRESHMENTS

This is the heart of the party — the fun and games all rolled into one. The children get to roast their own hot dogs. These are special hot dogs, too: insert cheese inside each wiener and cover with packaged bread



dough (do this at home before the party). Place each wiener on a long stick (you can

bring special barbecue forks or just have the children find a stick themselves once they're in the canyon) and roast over the fire. The dough puffs up and makes for a very good hot dog. Potato salad or baked beans are good with this. Of course, you can substitute and add to this menu according to your tastes and budget.

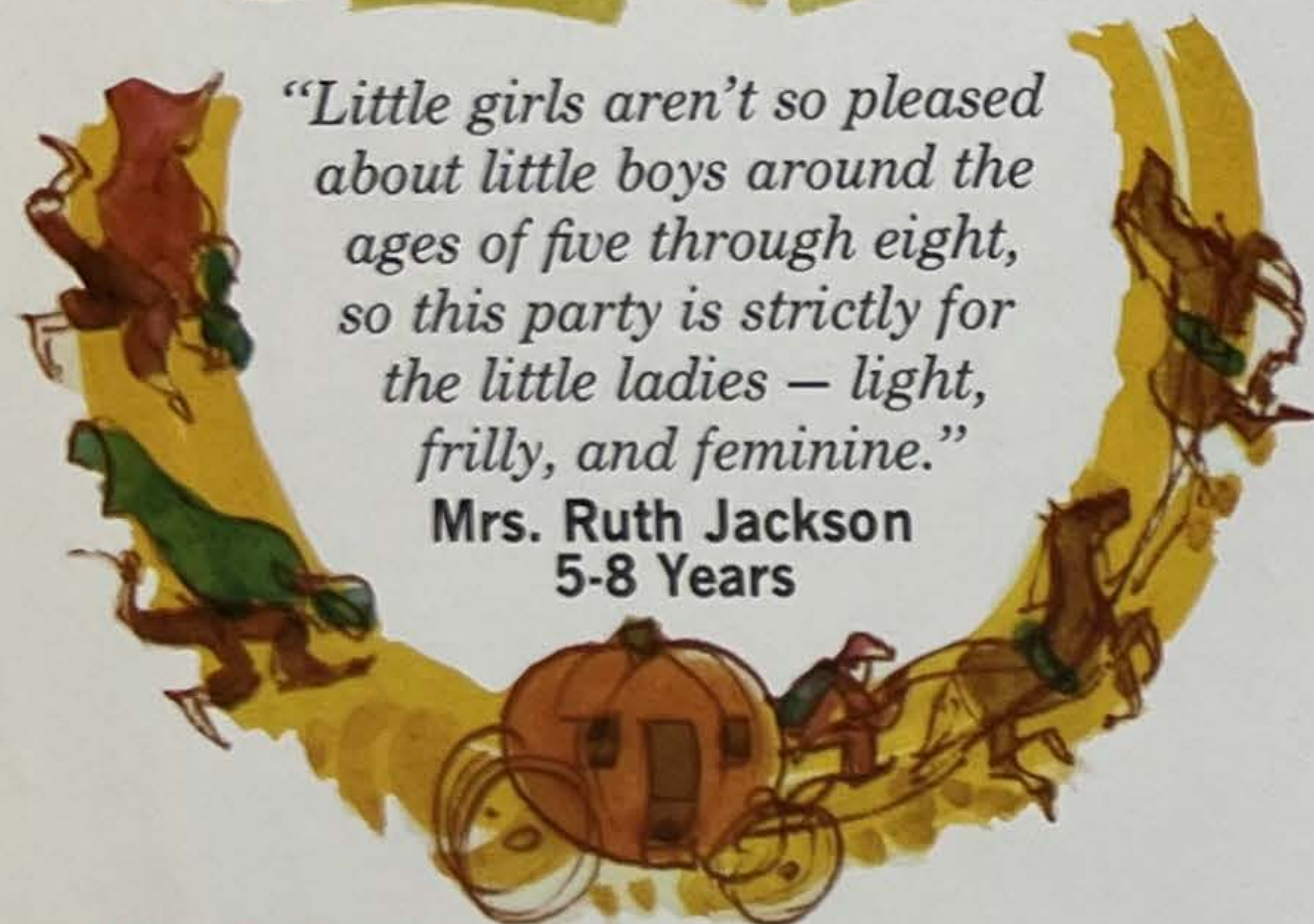


The day before the party, bake a cake in a long pan — they have pans with their own covers, now — for transporting without tragedy. Frost it with white or chocolate icing. Then top animal crackers with various colored frostings, and place crackers so that every child will get one, when the cake is cut in squares.

You just have to leave ice cream out of this party, unless you have special camping equipment which chills enough to let you leave it at the zoo all that time. The cake, with candles, of course, worked just fine for us — and the children seemed to feel that the zoo more than made up for missed ice cream. In fact, the zoo and the canyon not only make up for things, they make it one of my children's favorite parties. I suspect it will be your child's, too.



CINDERELLA PARTY



"Little girls aren't so pleased about little boys around the ages of five through eight, so this party is strictly for the little ladies — light, frilly, and feminine."

Mrs. Ruth Jackson
5-8 Years

INVITATIONS

This is my favorite part of the party: for the invitation, buy some pairs of clear plastic slippers at the five and dime store, and split the pairs into single shoes. Make a little paper



scroll, roll it and fasten with white ribbon, and place inside each slipper. On the scroll, you can write a poem. Mine went:

*"JaNece will have a birthday
Next Saturday at two
To make her day especially nice
She surely will need you.
Prince Charming has invited all
Her friends to his grand ball."*

*So she'll have everything you need
To be a Cinderella doll."*

Let your little girl deliver the invitations herself.

DECORATIONS

Cover your table with a white tablecloth, then with pink net. Catch the net up in the center edge of each side with a pink and green flower; or a pink bow would do. Now for the centerpiece: a castle made from various sizes of boxes and orange juice cans and covered with white paper, with colored foil turrets and flags stuck in gumdrops.



The cups and plates can be covered with gold foil. (All these colored foils are really Christmas wrap!) These make it seem very elegant.

Favors can be especially beautiful if you make little baskets out of sugar and egg whites, beaten together and poured into small molds and left to dry until hard. If you don't want to go to this much work, frilly little nut cups are easy to get downtown. Either way, you fill the baskets with

little colored mints.

The best of the decorations, though, is the one you eat — the Cinderella cake, made by baking a cake in a glass (Pyrex) or aluminum bowl, then turning it upside down and placing a doll through it to look as if she's wearing the skirt. Ice the cake in white, but put



lots of pink frills on the skirt, and catch them in swags with little bows or flowers. All this can be easily done now that the supermarkets carry so many fun cake decorating instruments.

ACTIVITIES

Before the party begins, make a simple white dress for each guest — out of banquet paper or cheesecloth. When the girls arrive, let them decorate their own white "ball"



gowns with paper flowers, sequins, ribbons which you've provided. Then each girl can



put on her own gown and have it tied with a colorful crepe paper sash. If you allow it, you can let each girl put a small amount of lipstick and rouge on; then put on the record of Cinderella (or any pretty music) and let them dance to it.

Crown the birthday girl "Queen of the Ball" with a gold-foil crown, and let each guest present her gift to her with a curtsy. After the gifts are opened, it's time for refreshments. (I think it makes the party more relaxed if you let a five-year old open her presents *before* eating — otherwise, she's so eager to get to them that she rushes her guests and doesn't appreciate the meal or her cake or anything!)



REFRESHMENTS

This is all finger food — which is what five-year olds make out of everything anyway. It's open faced tuna sandwiches, carrot sticks, punch, and of course, the cake. Cut right into Cinderella's skirt and give each girl a piece. The birthday girl, of course, gets the doll — a little crumbly, but it will be worth it.

DRESS-UP PARTY



INVITATIONS

No special invitation is necessary — you can find darling little feminine ones in the stores today. Besides the time, place, and day, be sure to tell each little girl to dress up in a long skirt (crinoline petticoats up under their arms usually work for long skirts — then a scarf for a shawl above make a good costume) and jewelry for the party.

DECORATIONS

The only real decoration you need is on



the dining room table. The centerpiece is a story-book doll with a very lovely old-fash-

ioned sun hat (plume and all). (You make the hat. Cut a piece of cardboard to the appropriate size and cover with pretty material, add sequins, flowers, plume and veil.)

Use a white tablecloth, put pink paper placemats with flowers on them made from crepe paper. (I like to make everything my-



self, but you can buy some lovely paper placemats). Have ribbon runners from the dolls skirt to each place.

The cake is a flat cake, iced with your child's favorite flower, pre-cut in squares.



On each piece of cake place a tiny plastic baby doll from the dime store (or you could use cupcakes).

The favors are flowered handkerchiefs (standing up) with a little name pin for each



guest. It's funny how little girls this age treasure flowered handkerchiefs!

ACTIVITIES

As soon as all the little ladies have arrived, play a game of musical hats. Everyone sits in a circle. One girl places a hat on her head as Mother puts a record on to play. The girls pass the hat from one head to another as



the music plays. When the music stops, the girl wearing the hat is out of the game. The last one in the circle wins. There are no prizes in this party at all, because I don't think little girls of five understand or appreciate competition. They prefer favors for all. So they'll want to play this game several times.



The next game is really not a game at all, but it's lots more fun for the girls. At a separate table, have paper plates with their centers removed and ribbon ties attached with staples. Give each girl one of these "hats." On the same table, provide pre-cut tissue flowers, sequins, colored feathers, and glue — two or three small bottles of it. Let



each guest decorate her own party hat. When each one is finished, it's time to proceed to the birthday table where each girl's name is printed on a balloon which is tied to her chair.

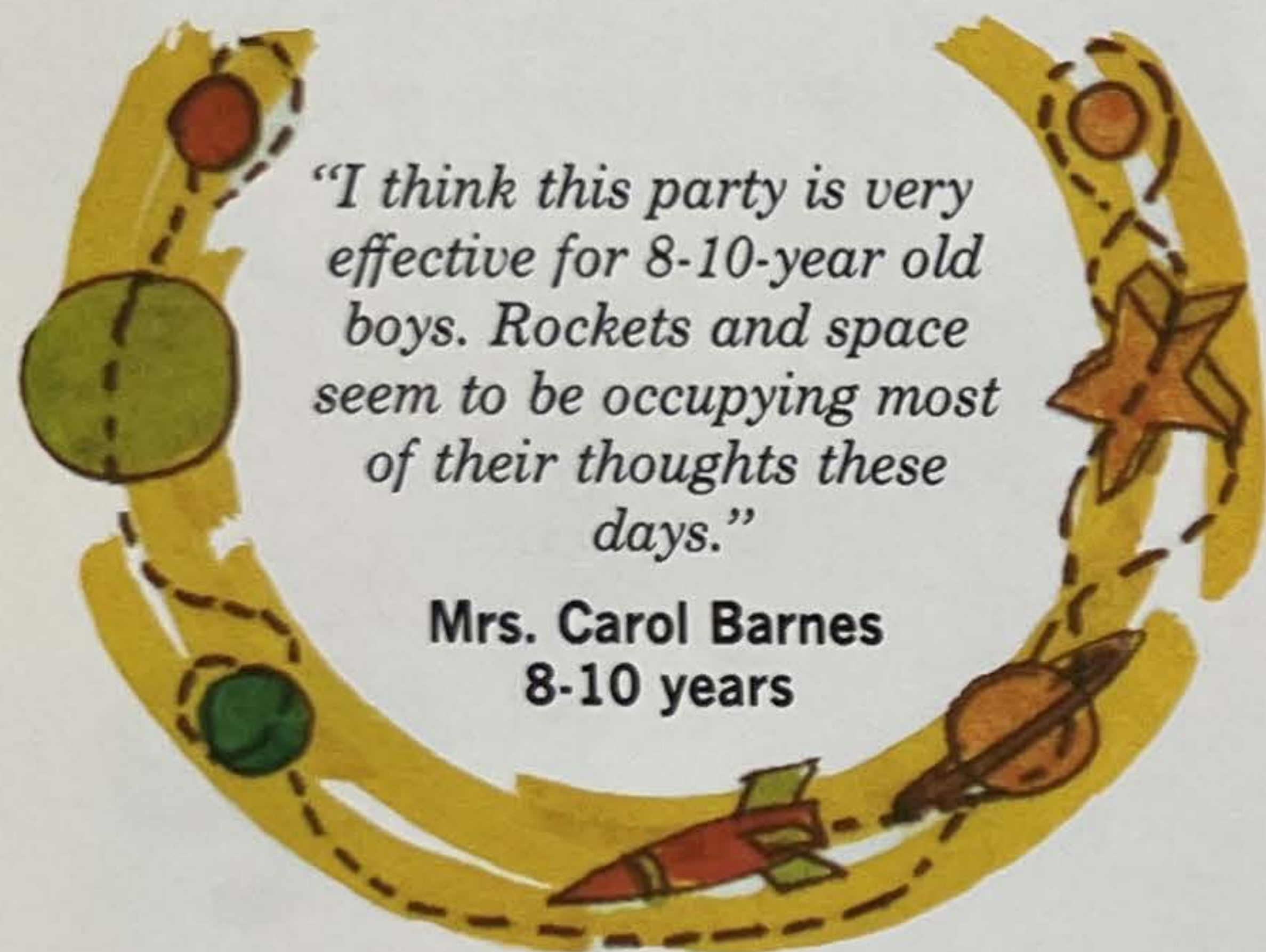
REFRESHMENTS

I had everything pink here, too — with pink frosting on the cake and strawberry ice cream (or you could use raspberry sherbet), and pink punch in pink paper cups.

After the refreshments, the guest of honor can open her gifts. The party should last about one and a half hours, for any longer gets too much for the little girls — especially the birthday girl. Each guest then goes home with her handkerchief, tiny doll, and balloon — and of course, her new hat!



A TRIP TO THE PLANETS



INVITATIONS

Cut a rocket from construction paper, or simply trace one on construction paper. Draw in details. The Astronaut for the trip is the guest of honor, Launch Pad is his address and Blast Off, of course, is the time of the party. The guest of honor may want to deliver them on his bike, or if he's consumed



with embarrassment about the whole thing (but still wants the party, you'll note) you can mail them.

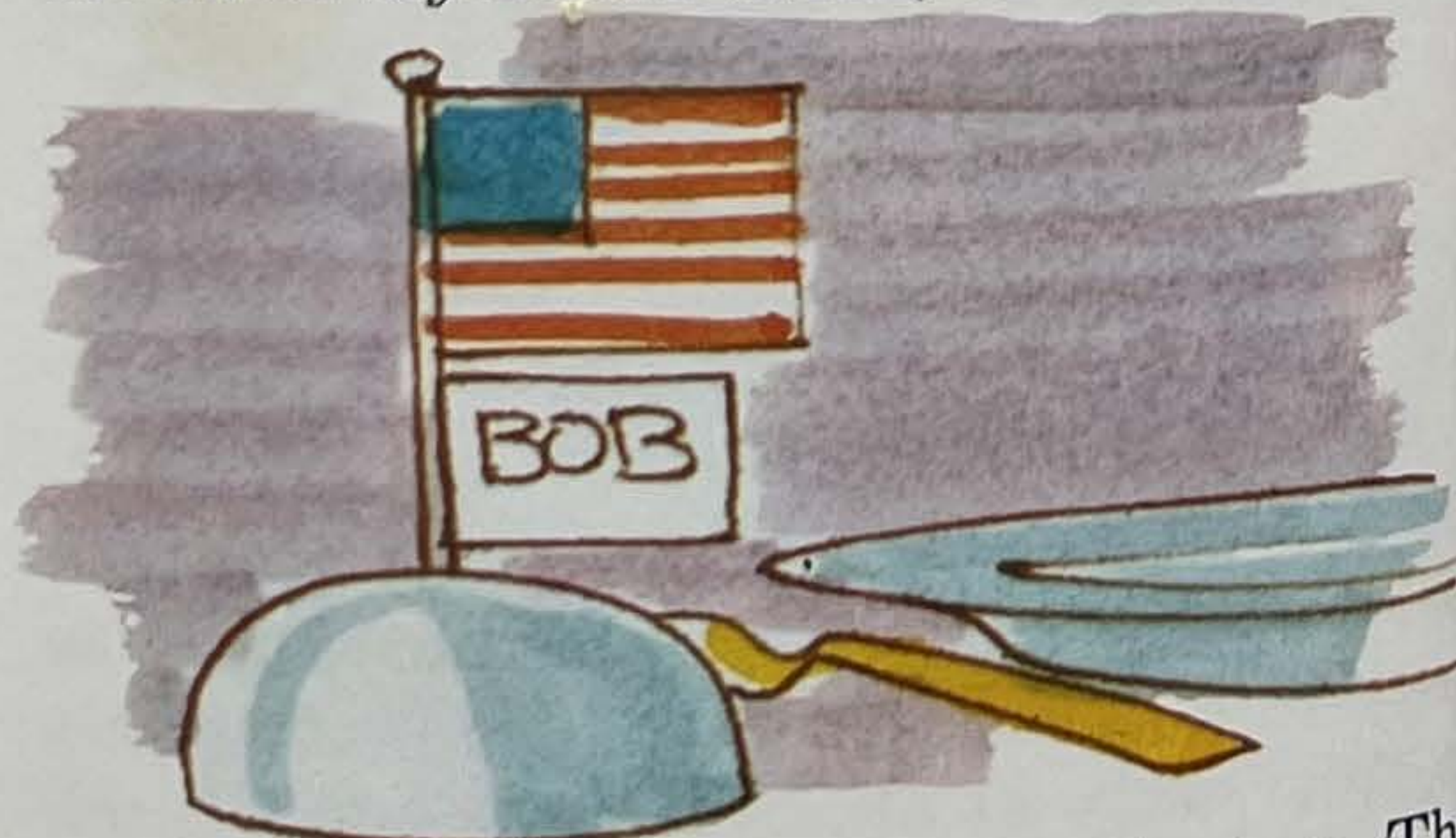
DECORATIONS

Since a lot of this party is outdoors, didn't put anything up inside, other than the table decorations — but you could put up pictures of Astronauts, World maps, or Galaxy maps.

The table itself has as a centerpiece the cake. This is a flat cake with white icing. At



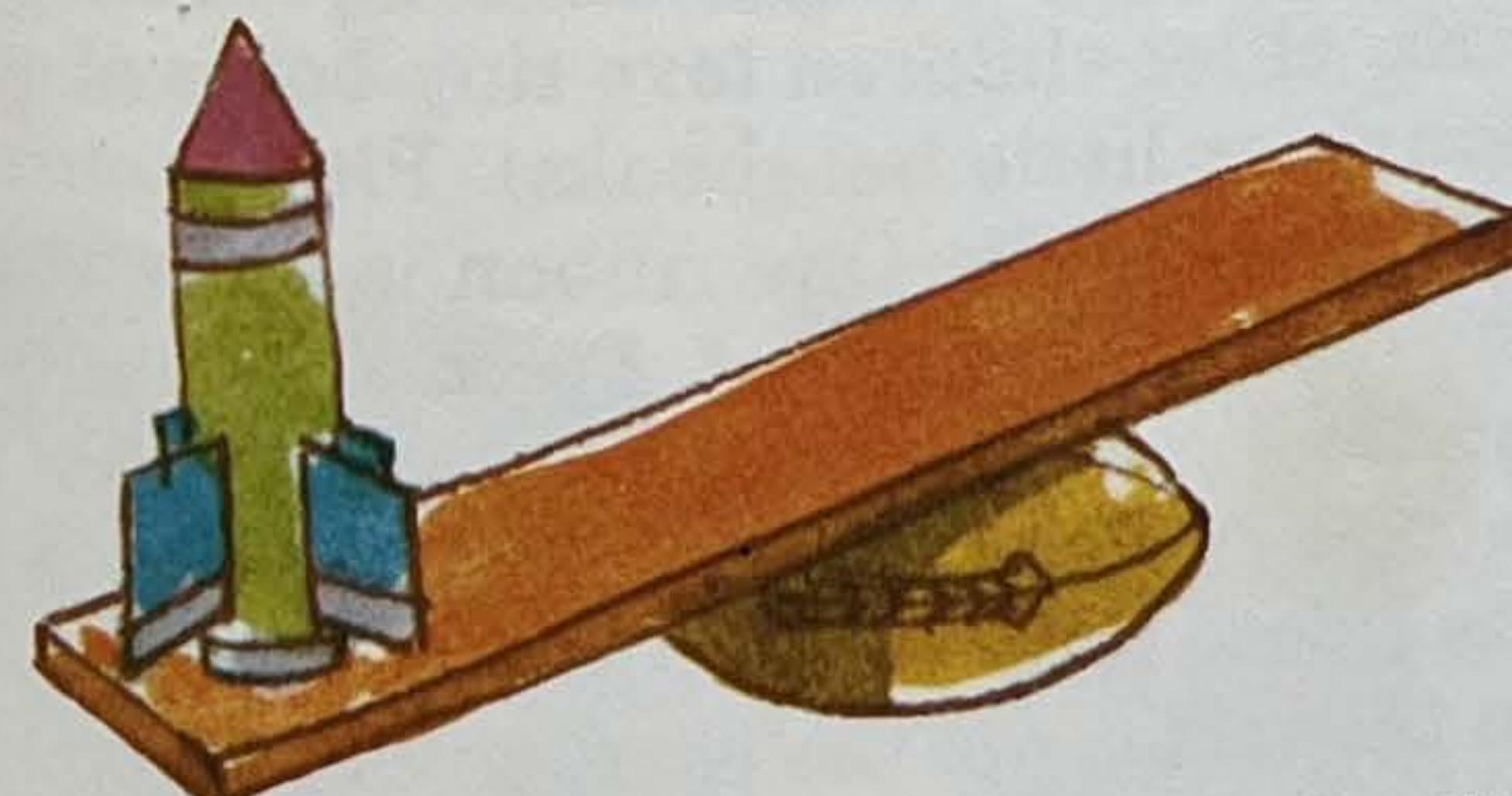
one end of cake is the standing Rocket Ship (inserted into the cake) with little workers or Astronauts down the field. The placecards are small styrofoam balls (cut in half) with



small American flag stuck in the top. The boy's name is printed on a small paper (or typed) glued midway down from flag.

ACTIVITIES

This game is fun and challenging. "Put The Rocket Into Orbit." Place a board about three feet long over a football (or some other small rounded object) so that it teeters. On the lower end place the rocket. (This your son has made the day before from a tissue cone, covered with foil. The nose can be made from construction paper — with pie wedge cut out — folded and glued on cone.) He will probably get quite carried away with details in making this, but that's his fun part in helping. With the rocket ready for "Blast-Off," each guest gets a turn "Launching" it (by hitting opposite end of board) up into a



basketball hoop or out into the yard for distance. The one hitting it the farthest or the most times through the hoop wins.

Next we played "Land The Space Ship." Here again, the birthday boy helps. Purchase a styrofoam ball about 12 inches in diameter. Have your son paint the Moon (with water colors), craters, mountains and seas — especially a rather large "Sea of Tran-

quility." Attach a heavy string to the Moon and hang from a tree limb. The boys stand



back a given distance, each one has a dart. In turn, they throw the dart at the ball, trying to land the space ship in the "Sea of Tranquility." Closest one wins.

The winners of these games gets one of the Galaxy maps you have on display inside.

If you have a telescope (or can borrow one or two) this would be great for the boys



while you finish up before refreshments. They love "star gazing."

REFRESHMENTS

Boys this age are always hungry, so you want to serve them dinner, simple though it may be. Sloppy Joes with potato chips or french fries are good (I'd have some seconds to offer, too). Dessert, of course, is the cake.



THE THREE PIGS



DECORATIONS

I confined my decorations to the dining room table. Make a red brick house from cardboard. (The same way you used to make card houses. The sides tilting slightly outward, with the roof just sitting on top.) Fill the house with little gifts (dime-store watches



for the boys and paper fans are good for little girls, older children love tiny boxes of play dough or little notebooks). Place house in center of table. One ribbon is attached to the center of the roof. Place other ribbons loosely from the house to each child's place setting. When the correct ribbon is pulled the house falls flat, spilling its hidden gifts on the table, and the children can open their favors. (I put their names on the gifts, to keep everyone from grabbing the wrong ones but if you have all boys or all girls you won't have to worry about that.)

Make your placemats from heavy pink construction paper, cut to look like a large fat pig.

You can make place cards out of the drinking cups, if you buy pink hot drink paper

cups with handles. The handles become the pig's eyes. A curled pipe cleaner can be his



tail. On the front of each cup, write the child's name.

To each child's chair attach a pink balloon, filled with helium, if you can get it. Draw a pig's face on each balloon with a felt-tip marker.



ACTIVITIES

For four and five year olds, you can read them the story of the Three Little Pigs. But older guests would probably be bored with that. If you have six and seven year olds, it's fun to borrow some cartoons, if you have a friend who has them with his home movies.

If you could afford the extra expense, you could rent the cartoons from local film distributors — in this case, you'll want to ask for the Three Pigs as part of the billed attractions.

You can run these while everyone arrives, or serve them dinner first while you're waiting for it to get dark enough. Then show movies, then open gifts. This way they settle down for a while after dinner, which is better for them than running around.



REFRESHMENTS

To carry through with the theme, serve the children "Pigs in Blankets," which are pork sausage rolled in a toothpick, or hot dogs baked in bread or biscuit dough. (I find the children like hot dogs better than sausage.) For dessert, try a pink cake with pink frosting, baked in two round eight-inch pans and two smaller pans, then formed to look like a pig. Pink Hawaiian punch or pink lemonade and strawberry ice cream carry this pink theme through. The children loved this party, and amazingly enough, did not try to act like little pigs!

"Children from four to seven will enjoy this theme. They remember the story and like to 'make the house fall down.' I think you'll like it, too — for it only costs around \$3.00 for the whole thing!"

Mrs. Valerie Cole
4-7 years

INVITATIONS

Cut out pink construction paper houses with drawing of the three little pigs on the front. Write the time, place and date on the



reverse side. I added that dinner would be served, so that the parents will know in their own planning for the day.



DOCTOR DOOLITTLE

DECORATIONS

This is a good party for five year olds. The decorations can be big and simple, such as pink and yellow crepe paper streamers strung across the ceiling of the dining room with bunches of balloons tied together in the corners. Some novelty stores carry balloons in the shapes of animals, which would be fun if they aren't too expensive.

Cover your table with a plain white cloth. I appliqued animal and flower designs on mine, and trimmed it with fringe. You could just buy a paper tablecloth, if it's printed with animals.



For favors, push a skewer through a package of lifesavers, making the hole go all the way through. Insert a pipe cleaner through the hole. Then with more pipe cleaners make paws and feet. Put a paper face of an animal on the top, and you have an unusual animal that they'll love. I also added horns and nut cups.

ACTIVITIES

Some mothers like to let the children just play freely. I like to keep them busy every

minute. So here are my suggestions for four games, each about 10-15 minutes.



Before the party starts, hide at least 30 unshelled walnuts — either inside or outside for the "Nut Hunt." Divide the children into two teams — puppies and monkeys. Give each team a sack. At the signal, start the teams hunting for the nuts. When the nuts are found, instead of the player picking the nut up, he must stand and make a noise like a puppy or monkey until a grown-up comes to put the nut in his team's bag. The team finding the most nuts wins.



"Animal Charades" are fun for this age. Each guest in turn must act like an animal of his choosing. The others try to guess what he is. He must continue to act like an animal until someone guesses correctly, or until everyone gives up. (Each player whispers to the grown-up what he's planning to be before he starts. Five year olds have a way

of changing their rules halfway through the game, if someone guesses too soon.)



For "Clay Animals," hand out equal amounts of clay to each child. Tell them they may make any animal they choose. Allow the children at least 15 minutes to complete their work. Then award everyone a prize for extraordinary features — such as the biggest feet, or the longest nose, etc. As they're doing this, you might play the record of Dr. Doolittle, if you have it — it has some nice songs for children on it.

And for a quiet activity, tell the story of Dr. Doolittle. I condensed it down to a very general five year old version.

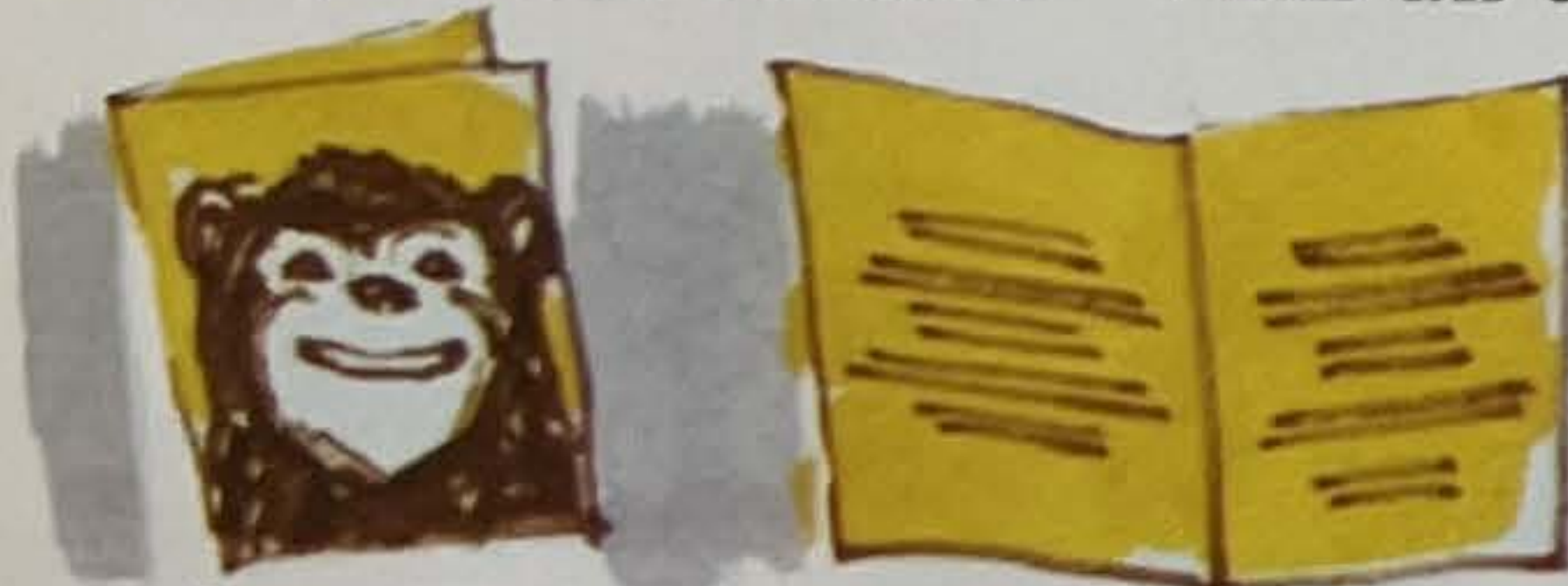
REFRESHMENTS

These are very simple: Ice cream, cake, punch, candy and nuts. If you use a little imagination, you should be able to decorate your cake with animals. Most bakeries and dime stores have plastic animals to decorate your Dr. Doolittle cake. Or you can frost animal crackers in bright colors for the same effect.

"The movie carried this delightful story to thousands of children, so many will already be familiar with your theme, as you invite them into the world of Doctor Doolittle."
Mrs. Elaine Perkins
4-6 years

INVITATIONS

Glue a colored paper cut-out of one of Dr. Doolittle's animals onto heavy white construction paper, folded once. Inside, write your invitation. I used a little verse, with a monkey on the outside: "I am an active



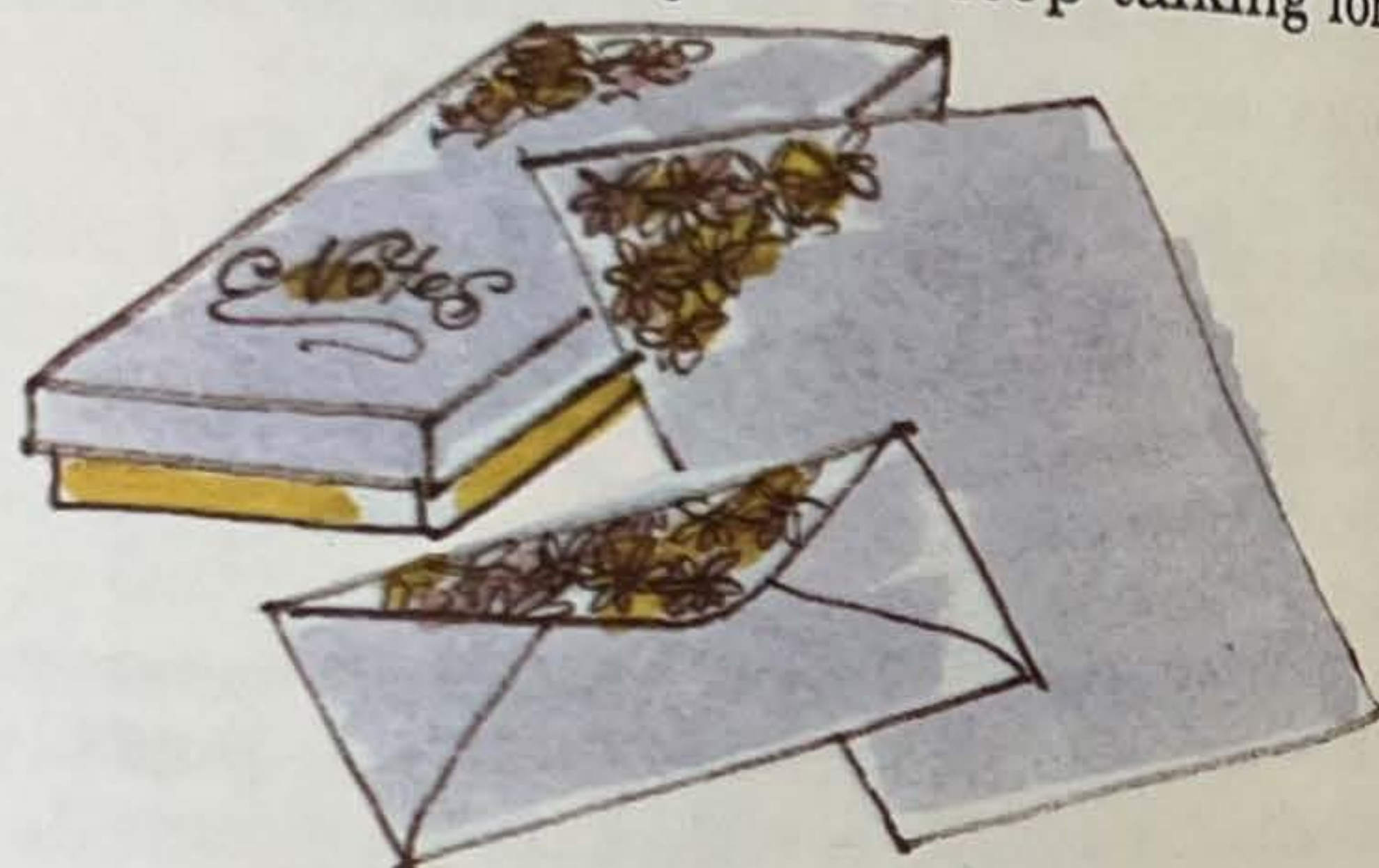
monkey; With a long, long tail; If you don't come to my party; I'll sit right down and wail." Then I gave time and place. I like to know whether my child will be fed dinner or not, so I added the word "treats" so the mothers would know we weren't having lunch or dinner.



SLUMBER PARTY

DECORATIONS

None are necessary — or am I rationalizing? Girls this age don't notice anything but each other, and they never stop talking long



enough to look at anything. One thing they do appreciate and like are favors. Boxes of note paper with a cute design — all different, of course, are appropriate and inexpensive.



ACTIVITIES

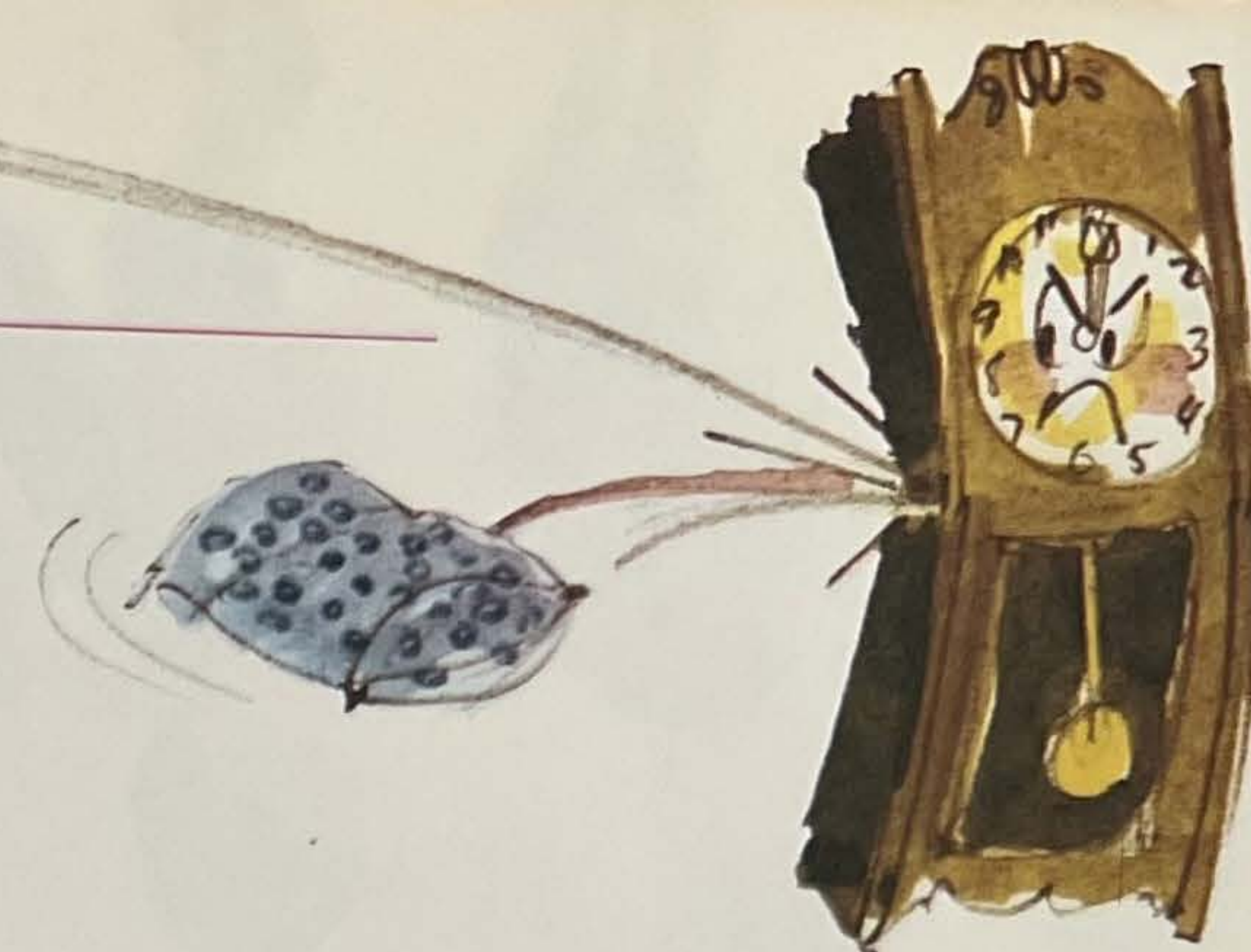
Always, always, teenage girls chatter until you think you'll go out of your mind. I probably wouldn't have needed a thing for them to do but open presents, but to be safe plan some activities. First — a taffy pull. Fudge is easier, but taffy is more fun. Let the girls pop their own popcorn and everyone will have plenty to eat.

Two games should be enough. Try a "Balloon Relay" for one. Inflate long-style balloons (but use the small ones). Tie a 12-inch piece of twine string on the end of each balloon. Choose up sides and give each person a balloon. Another person sits in a chair with a pin sticking up from a hat. On a given signal both teams send one girl up and stand on either side of the chair and try to break the balloon on the pin. But they must hold onto the string only and hold onto the very end of the string. This sounds easy, but the balloon won't go where you want it to.



The Balloon Relay is run like any other; as soon as one person's balloon breaks the next member runs up. The winning team may be awarded prizes if you think it's necessary. I think I can guarantee you a riot of squeals and laughter with this one!

Another game to play before it's "lights out" time is a quieter one: unscrambling words. Make a list of 15 scrambled words which are put on a poster. Give each girl a paper and pencil. The girl who unscrambles the most words in 10 minutes wins the game.



(Little plants make good prizes for teenage girls and I found some darling ones at my supermarket for 25¢.)

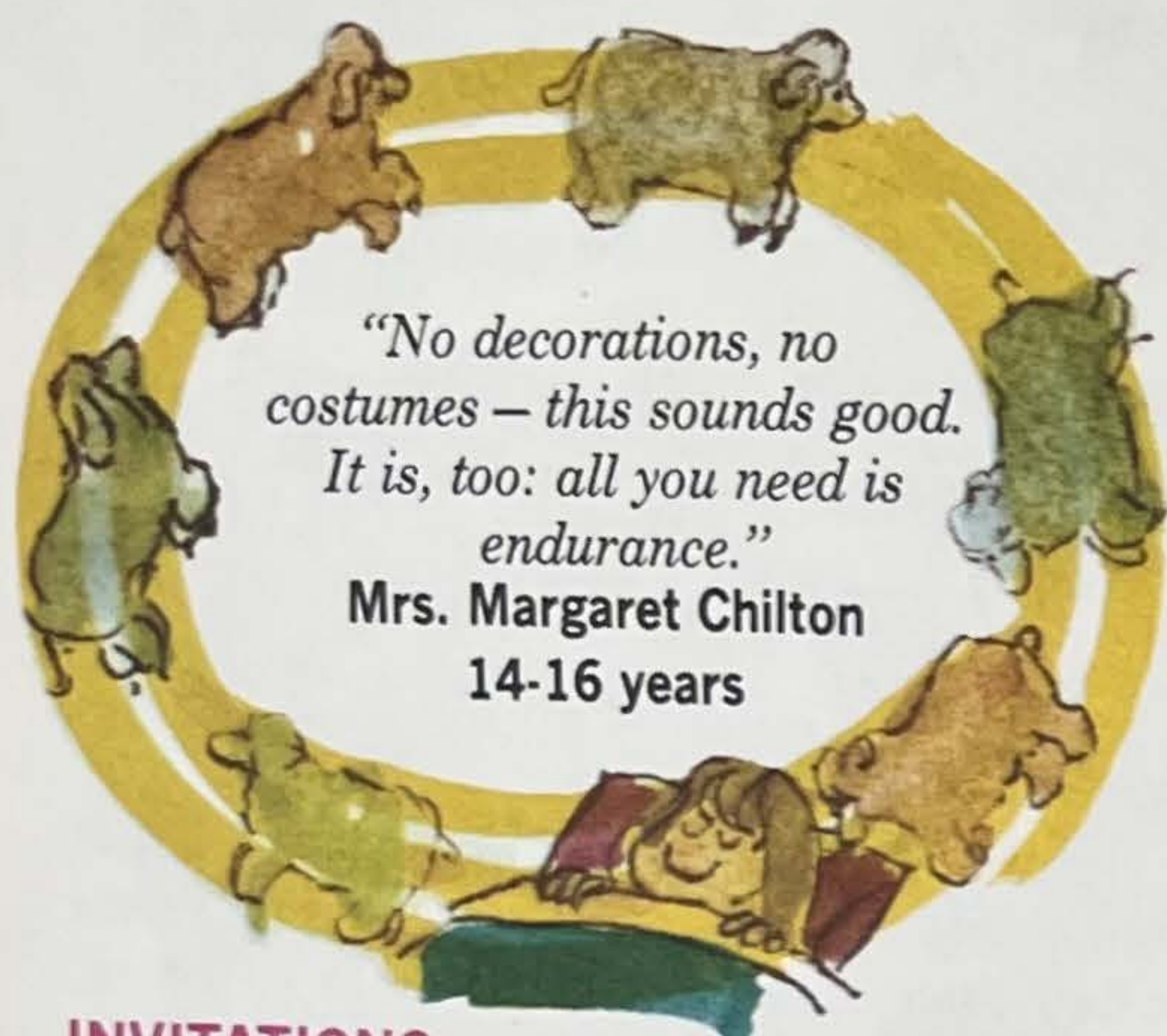


REFRESHMENTS

A birthday breakfast ought to be a little special. So how about fruit and scones? Don't faint at the thought of scones. I found a most painless way to have them. You know those packaged baking powder biscuits that come chilled in a roll in your refrigerator section of the supermarket? Bang them open ten minutes before the girls want breakfast, slice them in one-inch slices, and drop them into about two inches of hot cooking oil.



They'll puff up and turn brown in minutes, with you just turning them now and then. Drain them on a paper towel, then serve with butter and jam or syrup, and you'll want to sit down and have a few, too. My daughter loved her slumber party and so did her friends. I'll bet if you try it you will, too.



"No decorations, no costumes — this sounds good. It is, too: all you need is endurance."
Mrs. Margaret Chilton
14-16 years

INVITATIONS

We bought some cute ones at the store — ones that girls 14 to 16 would like — and invited them for a weekend night. Start the party around 8:00, and ask them to bring sleeping bags if they have them. Tell them



(so their mothers will know you'll be there and supervising) that breakfast will be served in the morning.

PARTY BACKWARDS

DECORATIONS

We held our party outside, but this would work just fine inside, too. We hung balloons from the limbs of the trees, and put our large redwood table under a tree. I covered



that with a paper party tablecloth and napkins, and use paper plates and cups from the store — but any would do for this party (color is the important thing). For favors I wrap big candy bars in birthday paper and put one at each place.



The best thing about this party is that everyone will get right into the spirit of the thing. Several boys will probably wear their clothes backwards (at least they did at our party and when the others saw that, they went inside and put theirs on backwards too). Then you simply do everything back-

wards from the way you'd normally think a party would go. Everyone sits down at the table to eat first — which pleased the entire party a great deal. Then the gift opening — but not before passing out a small gift to each child (something inexpensive from the dime store, like yo-yo's).



Then the games: a gunny sack race between two teams, throwing darts at the balloons in the trees, and our favorite "Black Magic." Have you ever played "Black Magic"? It's wonderful fun because only two or three people know the secret.



The idea is that these two special people (you'll have to decide "who" in advance) have a marvelous magic way of communicating, and to prove it, one goes out of the room while the other tells the members of the party to pick an item, any item, that he

must then have his absent friend identify upon his return to the room. When the friend returns to the room, the other magic person then tries to get the clue to him by quizzing him. "Now, Mark, is the item we're thinking of the chair, there?"

"No," says Mark. The chair will be out for sure.

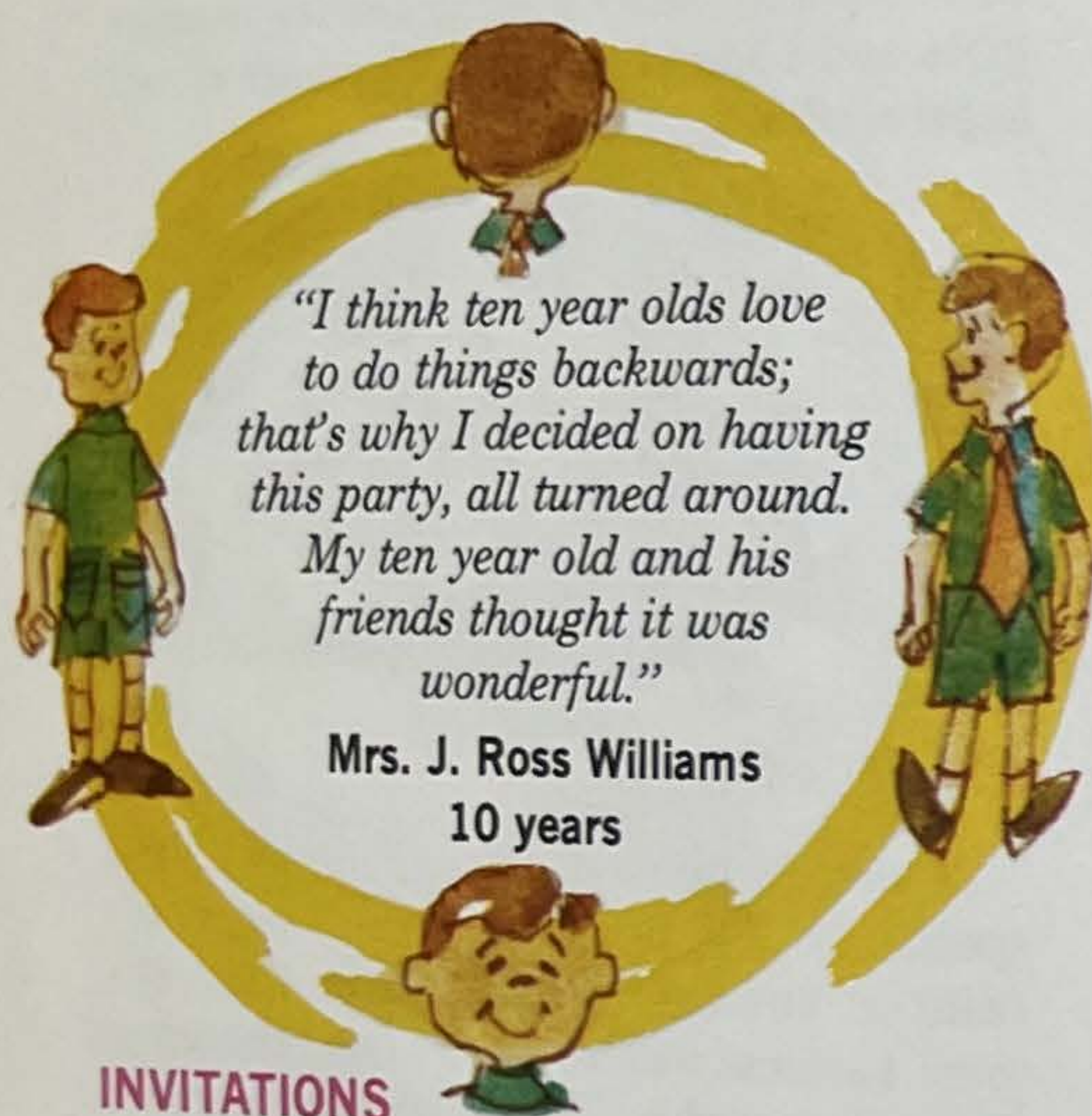
"Then is it the cat there in the window?"

"No," says Mark, but Mark notices that the cat is *black*. Mark then knows that whatever the *next* item mentioned is, it will be the one he's looking for, because the *previous* item was *something black*. People will marvel at the great skill of the two magic people, and if they're clever, they'll never mention aloud the color of the things they're mentioning.



REFRESHMENTS

This may not appeal to mothers, but it sure did to our boys! I served everything backwards — cake and ice cream first, then Sloppy Joes, jello, punch, and potato chips. Amazingly enough, they ate every bit from start to finish — didn't matter a bit whether it was forwards or backwards! That's a ten year old for you.

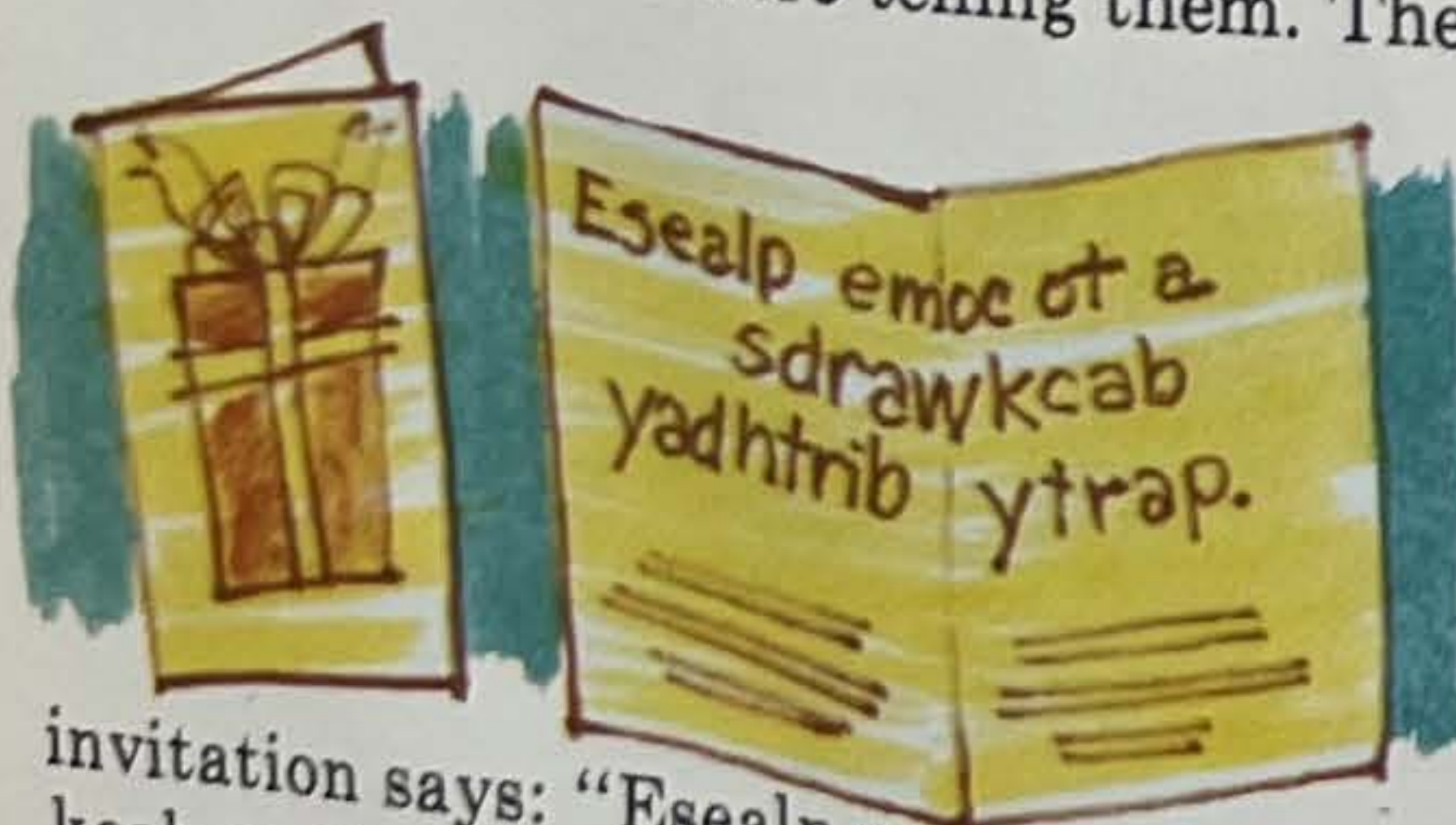


"I think ten year olds love to do things backwards; that's why I decided on having this party, all turned around. My ten year old and his friends thought it was wonderful."

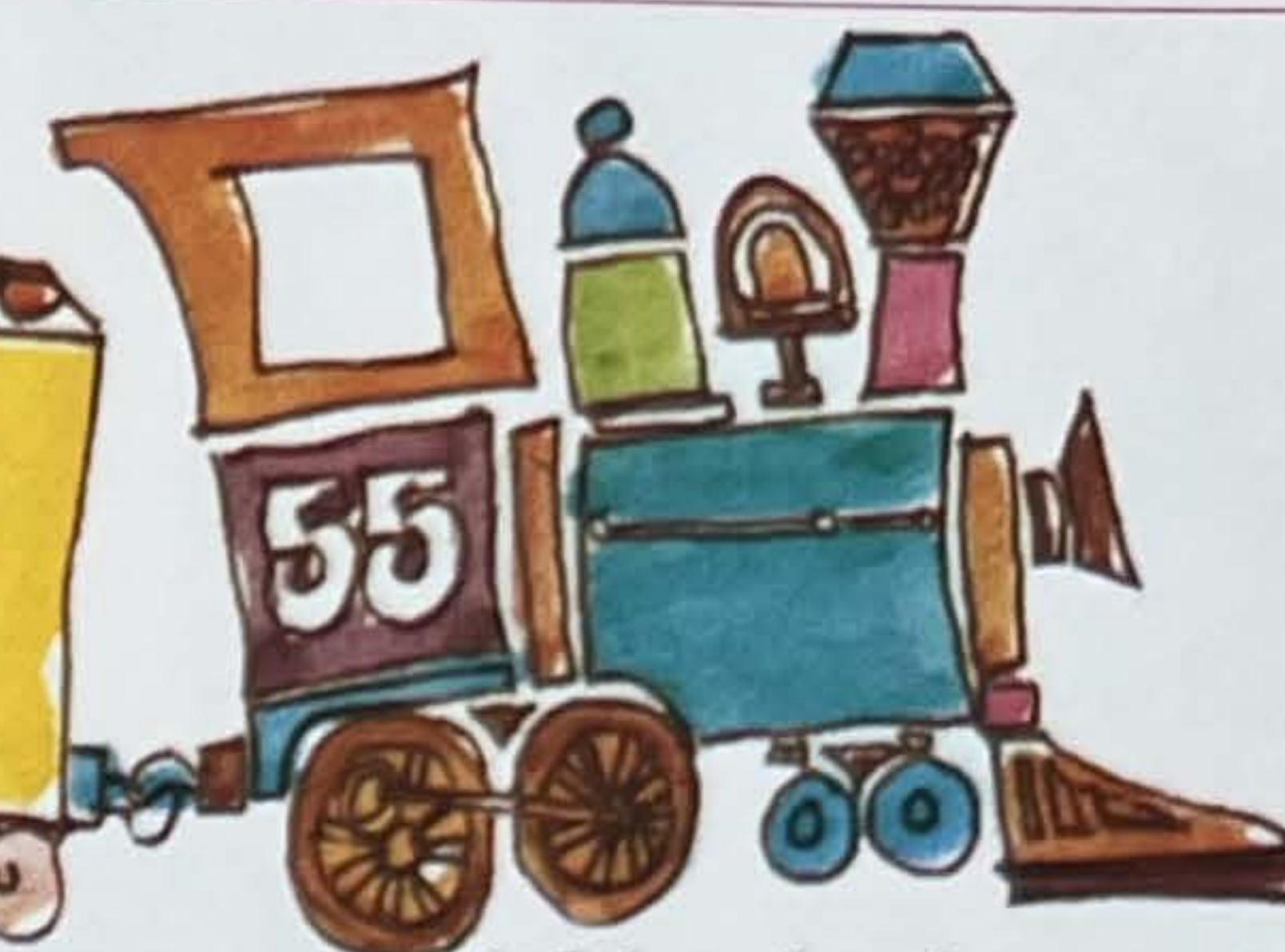
Mrs. J. Ross Williams
10 years

INVITATIONS

Begin your Backwards party by writing everything backwards on the invitations. The design or shape can be anything you choose. We used a felt tip pen on simple light-colored paper so the kids could have a chance to decipher what we were telling them. The



invitation says: "Esealp emoc ot a sdrawing yadhtrib ytrap." ("Please come to a backwards birthday party.") You can tell the time and place backwards, if you wish, but it might be safer to do that part forward.



DECORATIONS

A circus tent is the table centerpiece. Begin with an old cardboard tube from a roll of gift wrapping paper. Anchor the tube in modeling clay, and that will serve as the center pole for your tent. Cut a two-foot circle out of cardboard, and make a hole in the center big enough to fit over the tube.



Slide the top about one third of the way down the tube. Cover the circle and the tube with paper (any bright gift wrap or tissue paper is fine). With the tube attached to the table with the clay, glue the streamers of crepe paper in many colors from the top of the tube, over the circle, and down onto the edge of the table, so that each strip goes to a guest's place at the table.



The finishing touch — and the children's favorite part — are "men in balloons" at each place. Put a dab of clay in a nut cup

— enough to hold a pea shooter with an inflated balloon tied on the end. (Just tie the inflated balloon on the pea shooter. If you try to blow up the balloon *with* the pea shooter, then get it into the clay before it all shrinks up, you're in for a frustrating experience.) Now get some peanuts with the shells still on, and paint faces on them with magic markers. Stand these little "men" in the nut cups to look as if they were traveling in the balloons. The cake is the Carousel and circus rings under the "Big Top."

ACTIVITIES

As each child arrives, give him a place mat and let him paste a circus clown (pre-cut from colored paper) onto the mat and place it at the table himself. This keeps everyone busy while you're waiting for all the guests to arrive.



As guests present their gifts to the birthday child, I always let him give them a little favor in return (plastic animals from the dime store are good ones).

Five-year olds love musical chairs. Let the quiet ones just watch if they prefer it that way. I've found that by not forcing them, they often see the fun and join in of their

own accord. It's only when your guest list is too big, and the mothers stay, that the quiet ones never seem to break the ice.



A "Fish Pond" is fun for everyone and I let each child fish twice for small prizes. "Simon Says" is another popular game for children of this age.

REFRESHMENTS

The birthday cake is really three cakes, each baked in a half-full angel food cake mold. You can ice each cake with a different colored icing, place them side by side on the table, and position little circus animals around each ring, along with five birthday candles. When you cut the cake, make sure each child gets a piece with an animal.



P.S. As each child leaves, give him a white flour sack (the small variety) with a napkin on the front with his name written on it. This makes a great tote bag for prizes and favors.

INVITATIONS

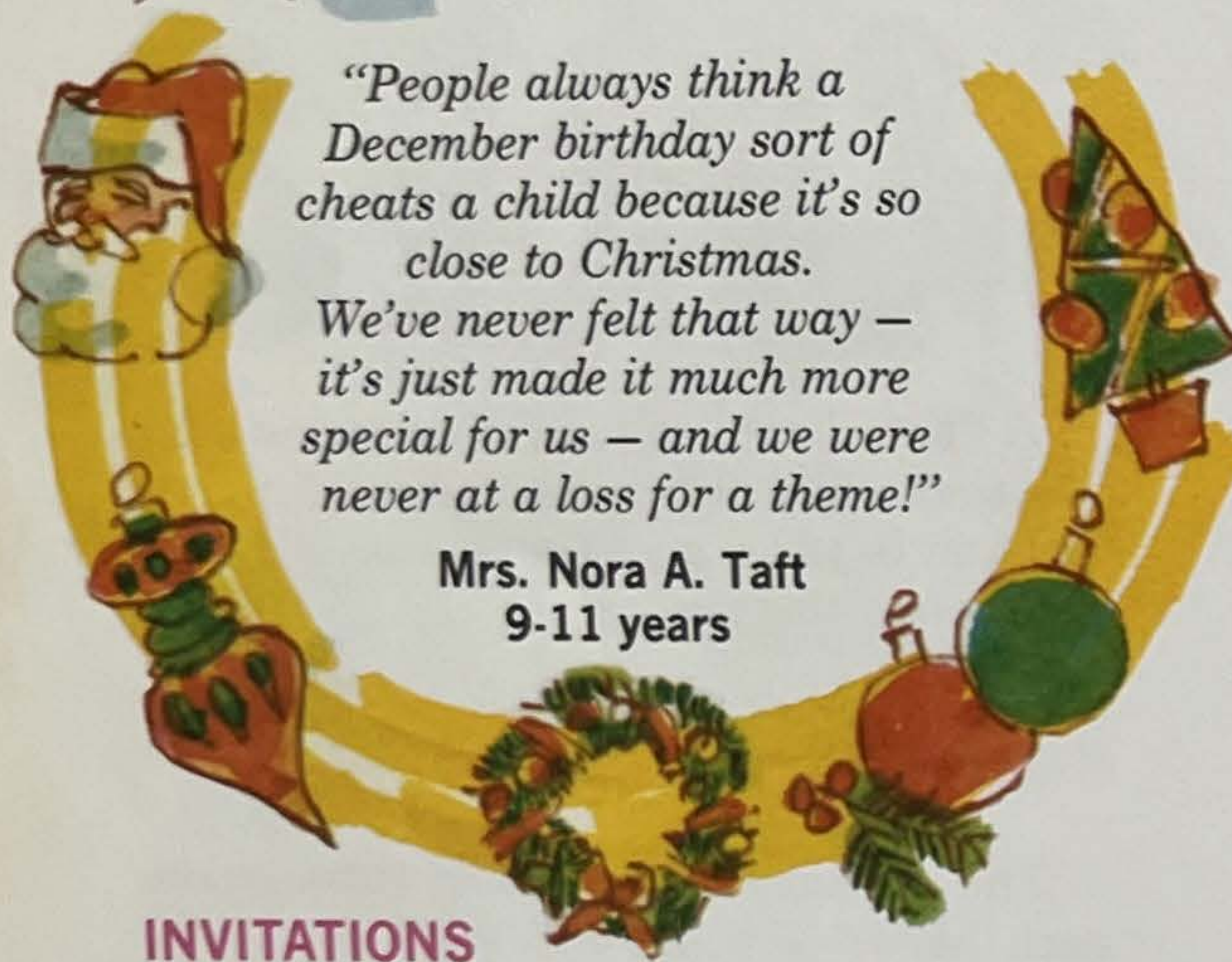
The invitations are made from colored paper left over from the decorations. I cut out clowns and circus tents, paste them on paper napkins, and use a ballpoint pen to write the time and place of the party. I let my five-year old deliver his own invitations.



I agree with the wise rule of thumb that says: for each year a child is old, invite one guest. Five years old, five guests. Everyone enjoys one another and the guest of honor isn't overwhelmed.



Musical Christmas



INVITATIONS

If you save your Christmas cards, as I do, you have a wealth of material for birthday invitations. Cut out figures from old cards and paste them on post cards as a "ticket" to the party.



DECORATIONS

With a late December birthday, your Christmas tree is up and you'll need no other decorations except the table. Use a plain white tablecloth, with red and green strips of crepe paper down the center. On plain white napkins attach Christmas gift seals.

Those seals fix up plain nut cups, too, without having to spend money on printed cups. I fill the cups with red and green mints or other colored candies.



Place cards are made by cutting green construction paper in the shape of wreaths, with the guest's name printed in the center of the wreath.

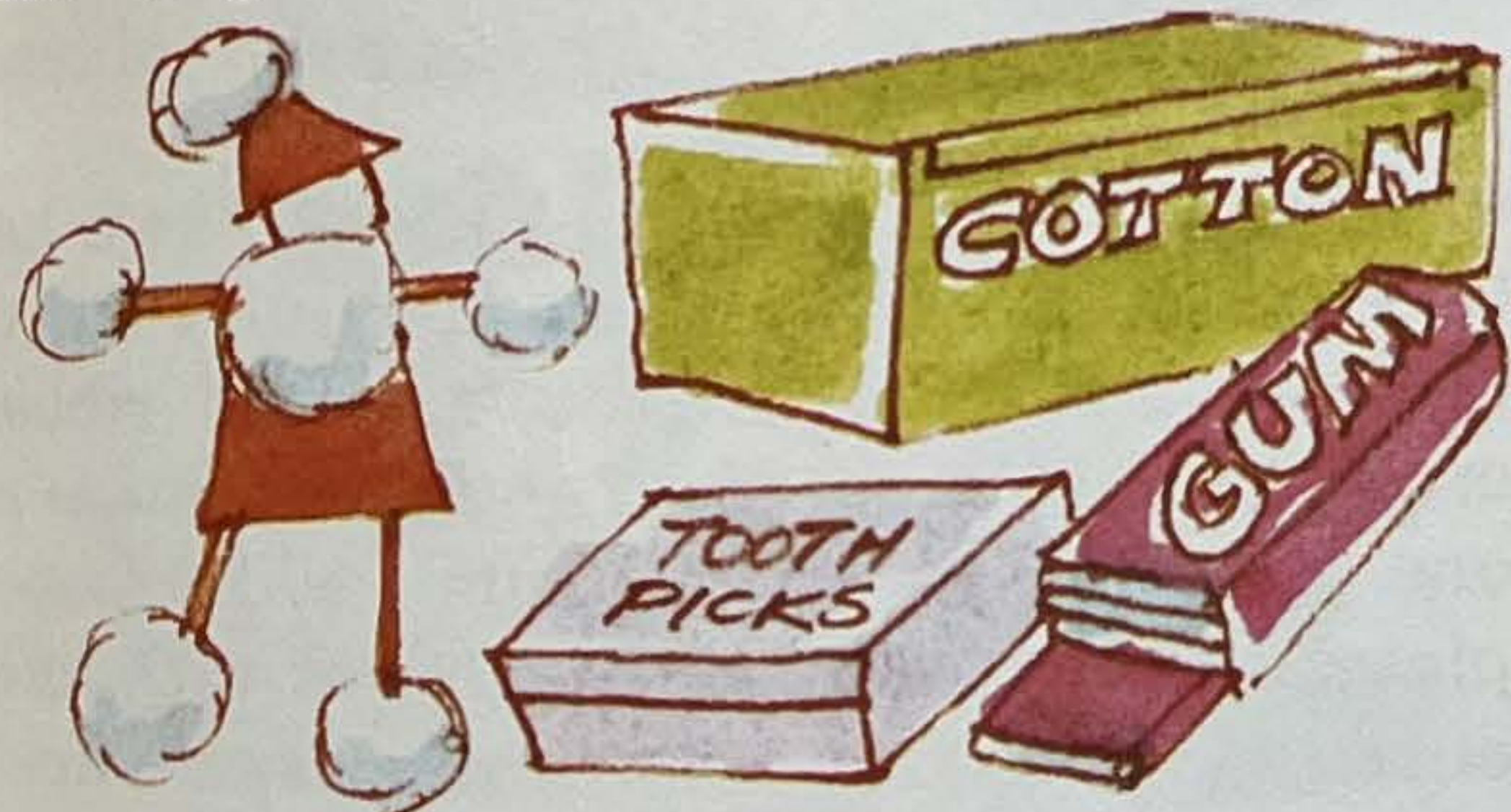
You can use your own plates or Christmasy paper ones, depending on your energy and your bankbook.



ACTIVITIES

"Magical Music" is a fun Christmas-flavored game. The group chooses a boy or girl to go out of the room, and also chooses a Christmas carol to sing. When the chosen one leaves the room, the group names an object to identify. The child who left the room comes in while the others are singing, say, "Deck the Hall."

The closer he gets to the item chosen, the louder the children sing; if he turns in the wrong direction, the song gets softer. He locates the article by the loudness of the music. This game gets everybody giggling, and breaks the ice. Not that ice needs to be broken much among nine and ten year olds ... Oh yes — and when the child finally finds the object, he chooses the next "victim" to go out of the room.



Everyone gets to sit down for the next game — "Santa Gum." Pass out a piece of chewing gum to each guest and tell him to chew for two minutes or so. Then pass out red construction paper, a little ball of cotton and toothpicks. Tell them all to construct their own Santa Claus, using the materials provided plus the gum. And give them a time limit of five or ten minutes. At age nine to eleven, the competitive spirit is just blooming, and they'll love it — but if you try this game with kids under nine, don't give them a time limit. They'll feel panicky, most likely.

For a little comedy relief (as if we hadn't had some already, what with those Santas made of gum), try playing "The Donkey and the Fiddler." Form a circle, with two children beginning the game. The leader, stand-

ing in the center of the circle facing one of its members, makes like a Donkey by putting his thumbs in his ears and bending his fingers back and forth. The person he is opposite pretends to fiddle. The leader tries to get



the fiddler to change from fiddling to "make like a donkey" by his (the leader's) changing to fiddling; in other words, when the leader fiddles, the other has to make like a donkey. If at any time both are doing the same thing, then the second person is "it" and goes around the circle to different ones to make them fiddle. They love watching each other do this.



REFRESHMENTS

Hawaiian punch served from a punch bowl is perfect for sub-teens. I also serve red or green "ribbon" jello (or mixed red and green jello cubes), potato chips with dip and home-made fudge and Christmas cookies. No cake? With this, they'll never miss it.



INVITATIONS

Fold a piece of white paper in half and on the outside draw a birthday cake with an extra rim at the bottom, so it looks like a fancy ladies' hat. Write the invitation on the inside.



DECORATIONS

My little girl loves bright colors, so I covered our table with a red cloth (red crepe

Birthday Bonnet

paper would do, too). Then I put two strips of white crepe paper to form a cross in the center. Over the center cross I put the birth-



day cake, which is made to look like a hat (the plate can actually be the outer rim of the hat and then if you add red ribbon around the bottom edge, and a red flower on one side, it's done). Regular white paper plates are decorated on the edges with lines of red magic marker. To white paper cups I tape a red crepe paper flower. (Add green leaves, if you want — made from crepe paper or green cloth.)



For each place setting, make a little nosegay. (Use the same crepe paper, or different colors if you prefer.) Make a few extras and tape them to green covered candle holders (white candles) as a finishing touch. The little girls can pin the red nosegays to their dresses as they sit down to eat.

ACTIVITIES

Paste a picture of an animal (cut from a magazine) onto some cardboard, and then cut the animal up into pieces, so that it becomes a puzzle. I put the animal pieces into an envelope and wrote the name of a guest on it in red. I did this for every one of the guests, using a different animal each time. As each girl arrives, give her her envelope and let her get started.



The idea is to put the puzzle together and then act out the animal they have, trying to make the other girls guess what they are. It's a fun game, but be sure each girl has enough room to hide her work as she puts her puzzle together.



The main activity is a "Hat Making" event. Give each girl an old hat shell or discarded hat with the decorations removed.

I gave each girl a sack containing scraps of ribbon, flowers, lace, pins, etc. Each girl then decorates her own hat, and takes it home as a party souvenir.



At our house, gift opening starts with gift hunting. My birthday girl and her guests love it. I hide the gifts around the house before the party starts, and then make up a simple rhyme describing where each one is hidden. (For the one under her pillow, for example, "This is where you lay your head, when you dream sweet dreams in bed.") I read each clue aloud, then all the girls run to her bed to help her find it. It's a different way for her to open her gifts and still have the guests enjoy it, too.

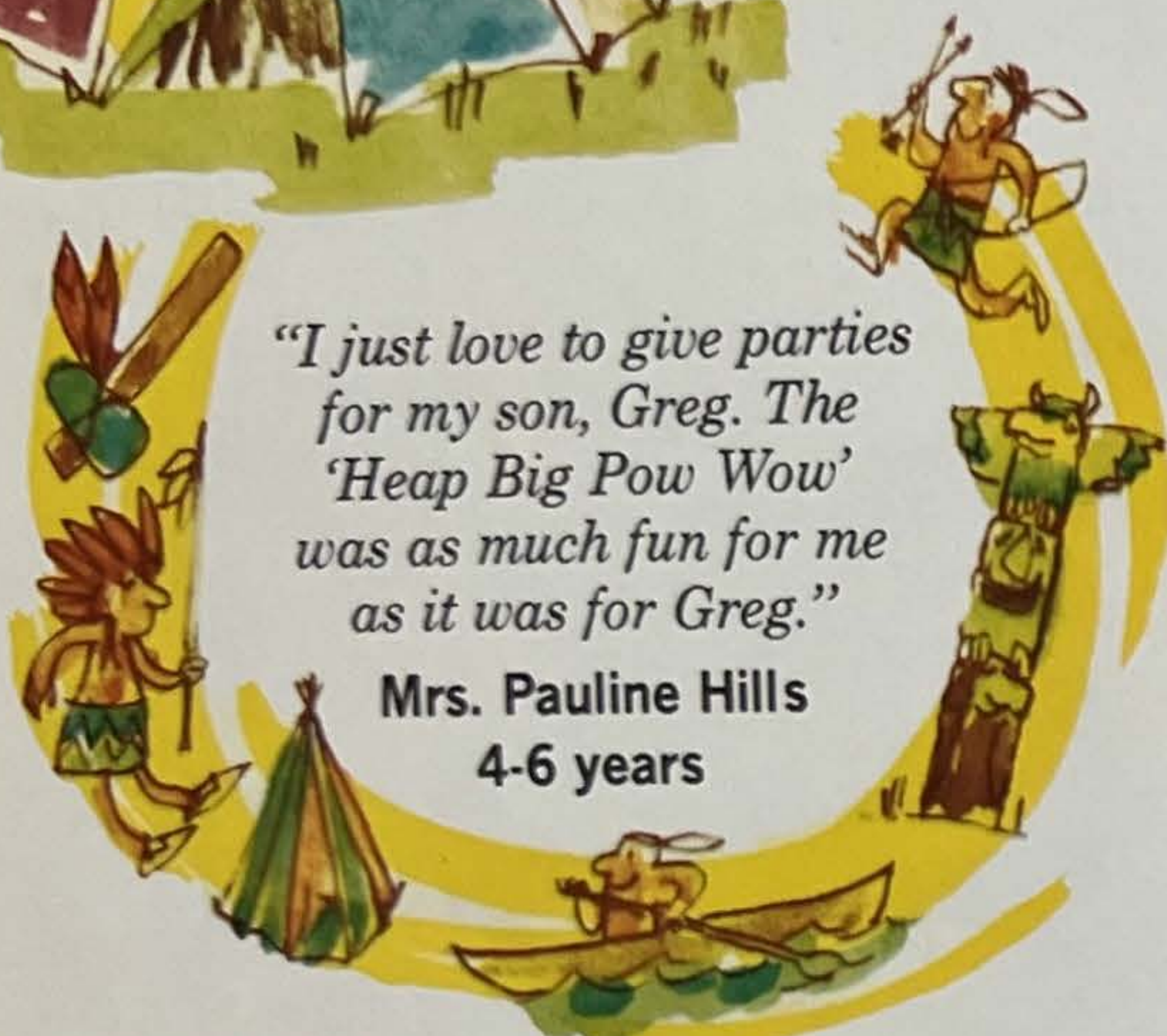


REFRESHMENTS

The hat cake, strawberry ice cream, pink lemonade, and pink mints made this party as easy and fun for me as for the birthday girl. Hope you try it. I think you'll like it!



HEAP BIG POW WOW



"I just love to give parties for my son, Greg. The 'Heap Big Pow Wow' was as much fun for me as it was for Greg."

Mrs. Pauline Hills
4-6 years

INVITATIONS

Our whole family helped cut colored paper into the shapes of Indian teepees. On the inside of each teepee I put a small picture of my son. On the other side of the fold, I wrote:

Greg Laughing-Face is excited
Just to tell you he's delighted
'Cause a heap big party's coming
And he knows that you're invited.

Date:

Time:

Place:

Ugh! See you at my teepee!



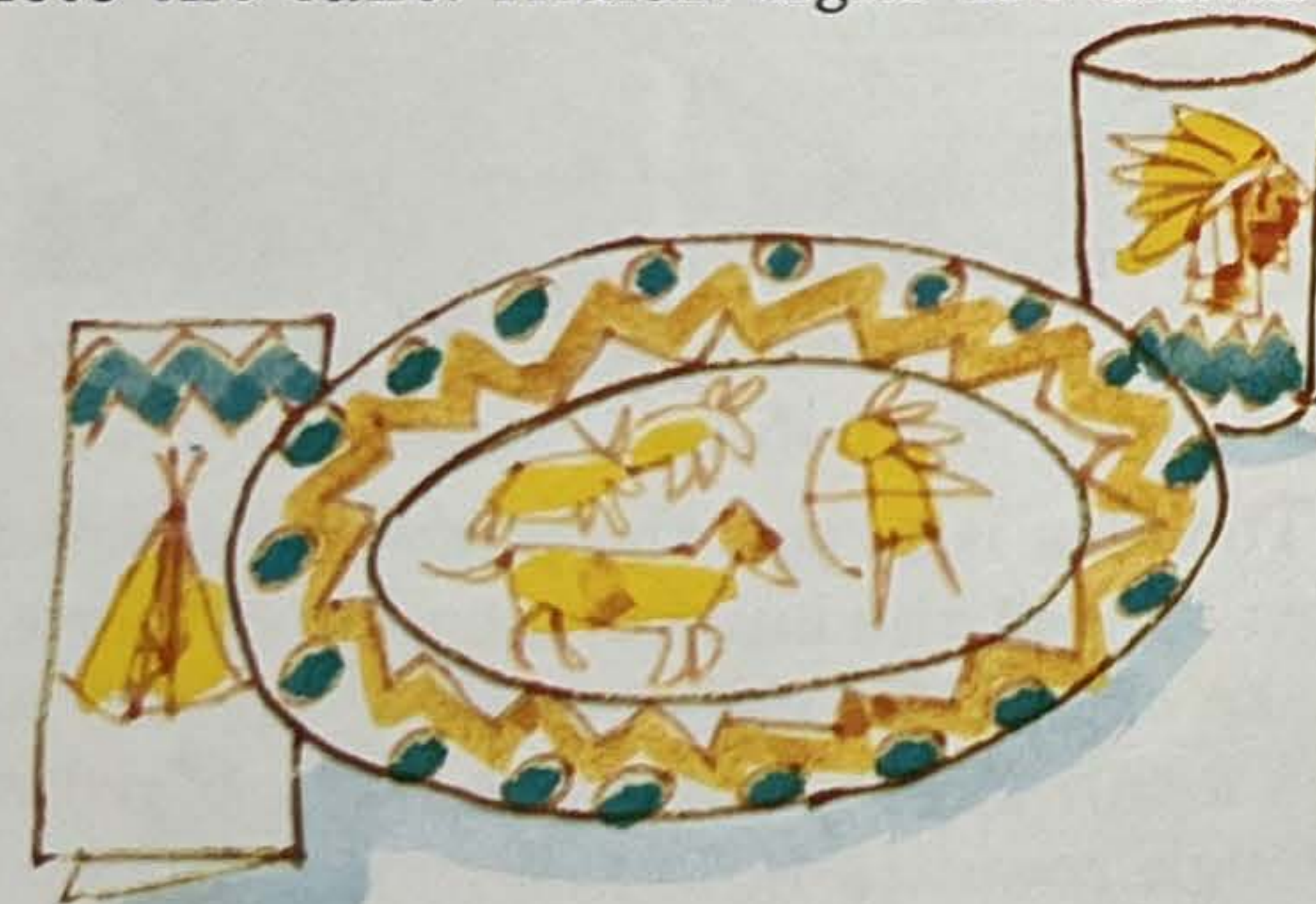
Let your birthday child draw designs on the fronts of the teepees and deliver the invitations himself. (If he's too shy, as mine was, mail them.)

DECORATIONS

Use a brightly-decorated cake as the centerpiece on the table, with five different colored sections on the cake, one for each of



the child's years. Add a candle in each section and a tiny teepee. Miniature Indian figures on horses (from the dime store) complete the cake. Indian signs are drawn on



white paper plates and cups (with colored marking pens). If your child has brothers and sisters let them help draw the designs. A balloon, with headfeathers attached with scotch tape, is tied to each child's hair. If the children can read, print each guest's name on the balloon with magic marker. Otherwise you might draw a face.

ACTIVITIES

As each child arrives give him an Indian name (Johnny Fleetfoot, Sam Rain-in-the-

Face) and hand him a colored paper band stapled together to form an Indian head-dress. Then have colored paper feathers cut out, some scotch tape and a stapler. Five



year olds are fascinated with staplers, and with a little help and supervision, can make their own war bonnets to wear for the rest of the party, and to take home.



I think the best games for little children up to five are those that are familiar to them — but perhaps with a little twist. A very good one is this variation of "Musical Chairs." Seat the children in a large circle on the floor. Give the first child an Indian Tomtom (an inexpensive one from the dime store). Start the music and let the children pass the Tomtom around the circle until the music stops. The child holding the Tomtom is dropped from the circle. The game continues until one child remains, and he wins the Tomtom.

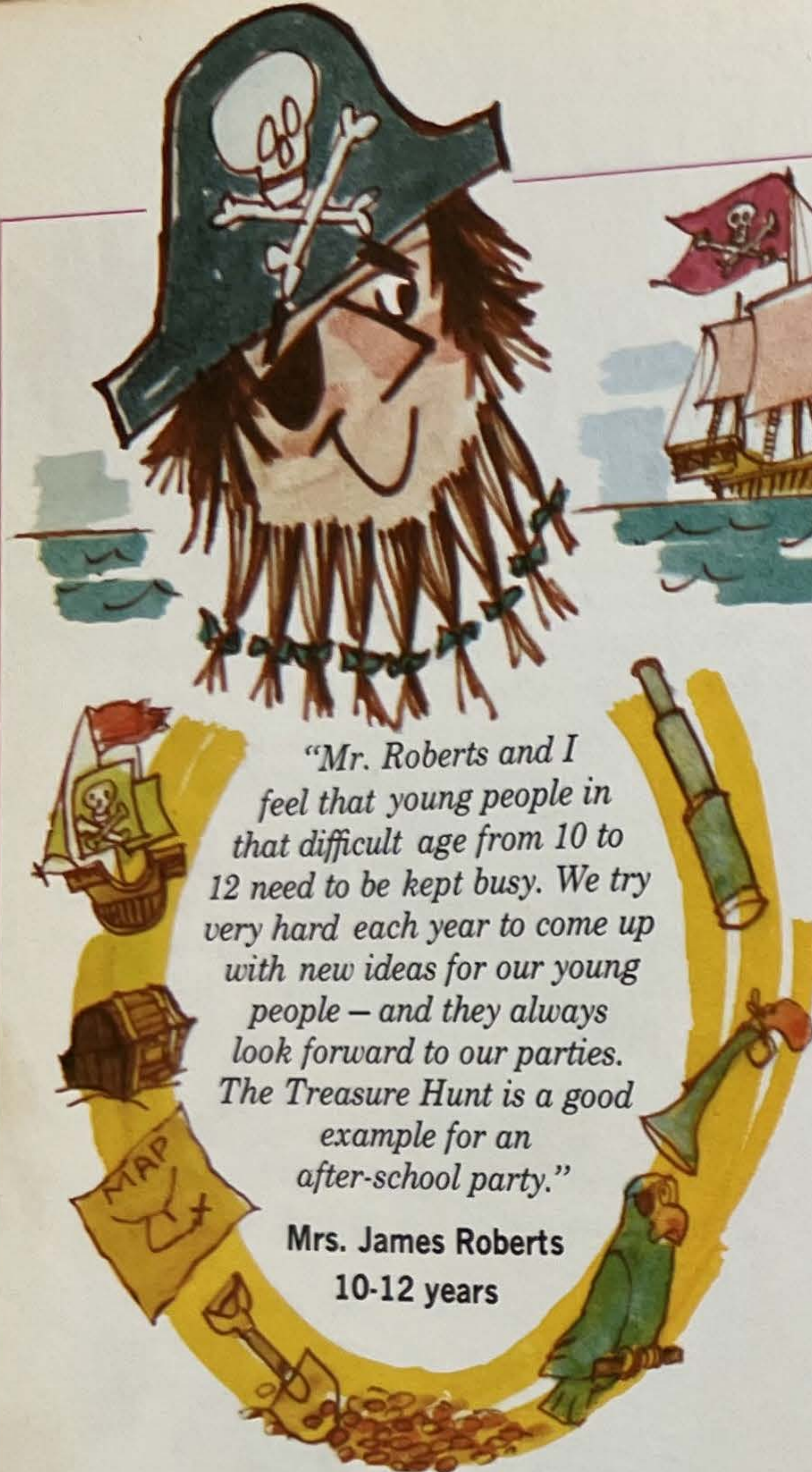
Another familiar game for an Indian Pow Wow is hunting for Indian Treasure. Make picture clues on paper. For example: I pasted a picture of a piano on one clue, indicating to one guest that his treasure is hidden near the piano. Another behind the sofa, and so on. Each child gets a different clue and all the "treasures" are hidden in different places. My son liked this arrangement because each guest found his treasure — a bag of "Indian Corn" candy.

Opening the gifts, of course, is bound to be the favorite thing for everyone. I let the guests "decorate" Greg with ribbons off the gifts, and he looked like an Indian chief in ceremonial dress.



REFRESHMENTS

The birthday cake is, of course, the focal point. I suggest "Indian Firewater" (any red punch) and hot dogs (which look like canoes). For a happy ending, give each child a gingerbread "Indian chief" to take home.

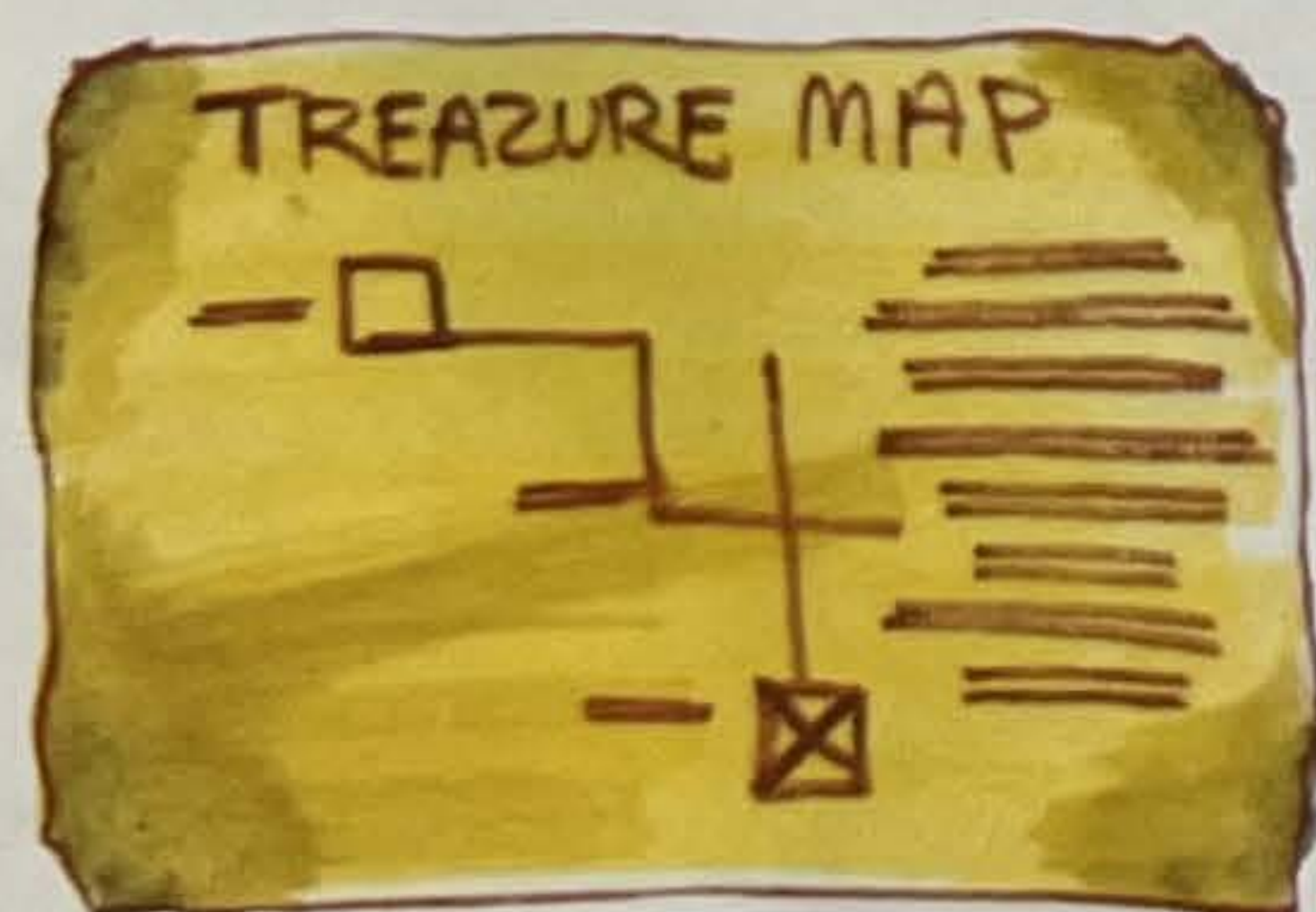


"Mr. Roberts and I feel that young people in that difficult age from 10 to 12 need to be kept busy. We try very hard each year to come up with new ideas for our young people — and they always look forward to our parties. The Treasure Hunt is a good example for an after-school party."

Mrs. James Roberts
10-12 years

INVITATIONS

We make the invitations from brown paper sacks. You could use yellow paper burned on the edges to resemble a treasure map just as



well. The map is drawn on the paper showing the school and the way to the home of the child giving the party.

DECORATIONS

The table centerpiece is easy: just get an old shoebox and cover it with construction paper to look like a treasure chest. Penny rolls may be obtained from your local bank, then filled with life savers. I encircled the shoebox with them and also placed one roll



at each place at the table. As each guest arrives he is given a pirate hat made from newspaper or butcher paper. You can paint skulls and crossbones on the hats to add color.

ACTIVITIES

As each child enters the house, give him 10 bills of play money. Each time he says "I" or "Me" he must forfeit one bill to the guest he was talking to. The one having the most bills at the end of the party is given a prize . . . perhaps a roll of 50 pennies. This really is fun. Be sure to continue this all the way through all the other games.

"Time Bomb" is perfect warm-up game while you're waiting for everyone to arrive. A time bomb can be purchased in almost any game or variety store for around a dol-



lar. The guests form a circle and pass the time bomb from hand to hand. The bomb ticks and finally rings or thuds as if exploded.



The person holding the bomb when it goes off has to leave the circle. Last one in the circle is the winner.

The best part of the party, of course, is the Treasure Hunt. Divide the guests into two groups, appoint a captain for each team, and give both captains a treasure map. Before the party, I hid two shoeboxes filled with play money, tootsie rolls, and candy bars in nearby vacant lots. (Behind shrubbery in nearby yards is as good — if you're on good terms with your neighbors. I made our guests dig for it in the ground, though.)



Each team finds its own treasure, but you could give prizes to the team who finds theirs

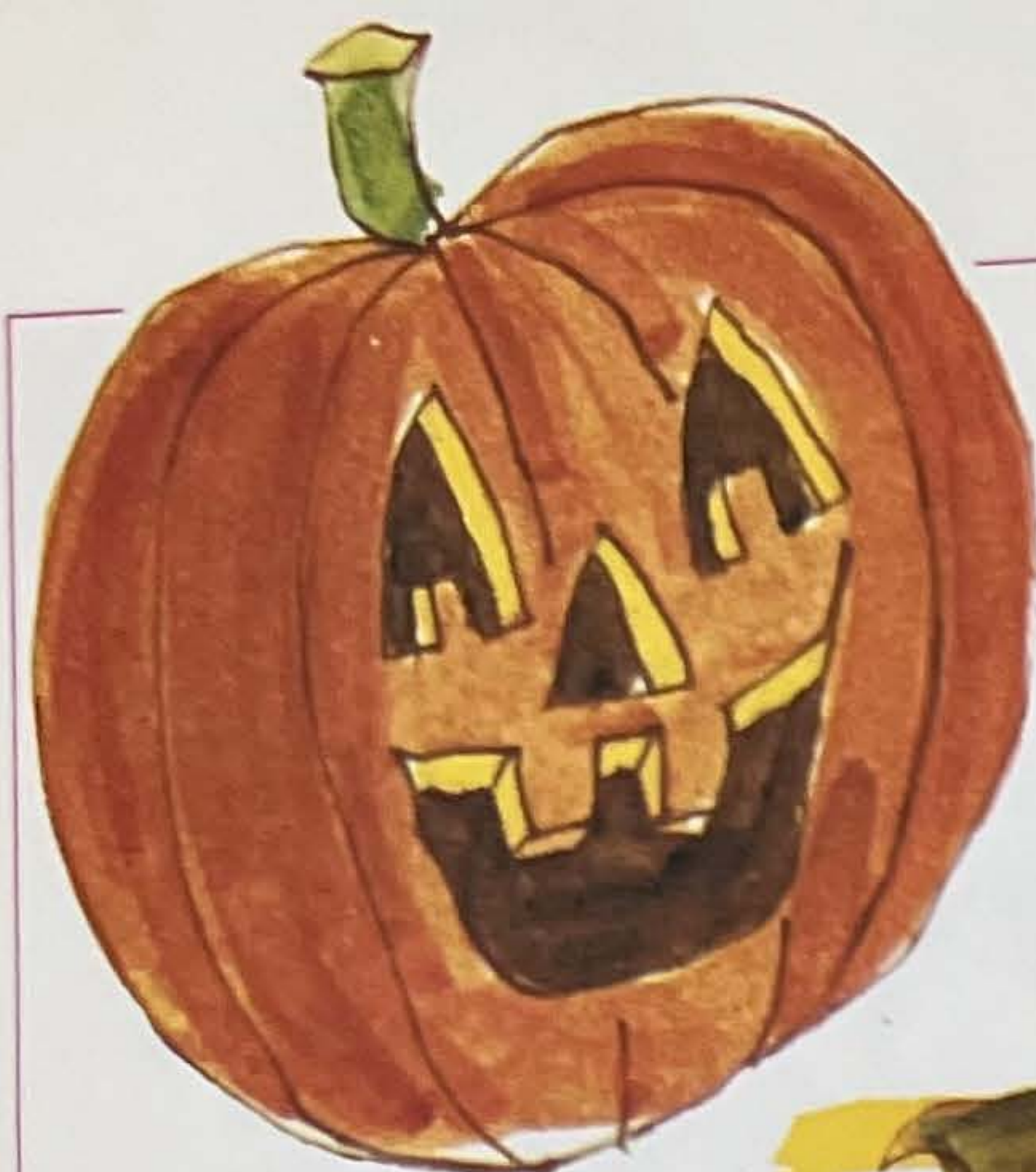
first. I didn't because there's enough reward inside the treasure chest. The youngsters divide the candy among themselves very equitably!



After the Treasure Hunt you'll want one or two more games. Our children like "Lucky Pair" — a dice game. Everyone sits in a circle. In the center are several intriguingly wrapped prizes (jacks, kites, a puzzle, marbles, etc.). The object is to roll a pair for one of the gifts. If he doesn't roll a pair in say, three rolls, the dice are passed on to the next player. If a player rolls his pair, and decides the gift he wants already belongs to someone else, he can take it or he may choose one from the center. The "give and takes" are much fun. Announce a time list or better yet, get a clock. You should limit this game to about 20 - 30 minutes.

REFRESHMENTS

Sloppy Joe sandwiches are a never-fail favorite at our house. I serve them with potato chips, ice cream cones, and punch. If you plan ahead, you can buy the meat, bread and ice cream when they are the most economical and freeze them until the time for your party.



HALLOWEEN TRICKS AND TREATS

pumpkin and put a bowl of chrysanthemums inside. If you want something good and scary, try painting an old bowl black. Then



get dry ice and put chunks of it in water. You'll have a billowy witches' brew for the table that should bring squeals of delight from the youngsters.



The only other "non-store" decorations were nut cups made from orange construction paper to look like jack-o-lanterns. Line them with cupcake paper to hold corn candy.

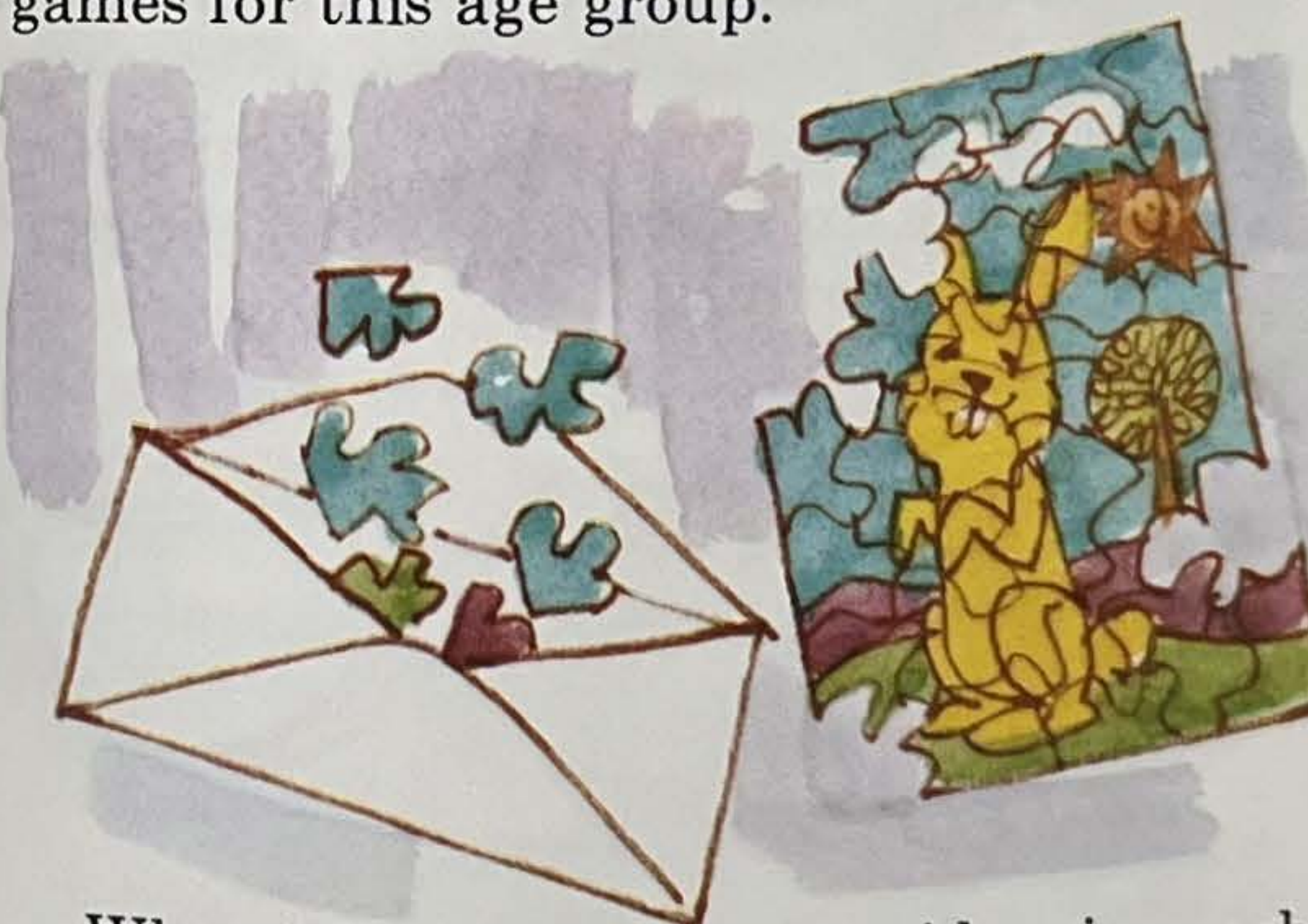


ACTIVITIES

To start things off (and to give early arrivals something to do) let each child make a paper hat from the Sunday comics.

I like to move a birthday party outside whenever possible, because children need to let off steam, whatever the age. One game they all like is "Chipped, Cracked and Broken." The children stand in a circle with one in the center. The center one throws a ball to the children in turn. The first time they drop it they are chipped. The second time, they are cracked. The third time they are broken and out of the game. The last one left gets a prize.

Drop the Handkerchief, and Statue (one child swirls then poses, and the others try to guess what he looks like) are other good games for this age group.



When it's time to come inside, give each child an envelope with a jig saw puzzle in it and let them put them together. The first one through gets a prize. They could take these little puzzles home with them.

For favors and game prizes, get a selection of 10¢ and 15¢ prizes and let each child reach into a plastic jack-o-lantern to pick his own. I let the game winners pick theirs as they win a game. Losers pick theirs out as second or third winners or as a booby prize. This is

part of the entertainment before the refreshments.

REFRESHMENTS

Ice cream, cake and punch are enough refreshments for this age, particularly if they're on the fancy side. A round, two layer cake



with orange frosting looks exactly like a jack-o-lantern when you add pieces of black gumdrops for a face. I still like to bake nickels, dimes and pennies into the cake so each child gets a special surprise. (Wrap them first in wax paper and be careful to distribute them evenly.) Have some extras on hand in case one child doesn't get one.

If you have a freezer, try round scoops of vanilla ice cream in a dish (or cone) with bits of chocolate to make a face and a green gumdrop for a hat. These are very colorful and delight the children. Or you could use orange sherbet and a black gumdrop if you're not sick of orange and black by this time. They do take a little time though, and take a fair amount of space in the freezer.

"Some people feel sorry that a birthday comes right near Halloween. We've never felt that way, because each year we have a good theme to use for the party, but we can vary it every year."

Mrs. Jackie Olmstead
4-6 years

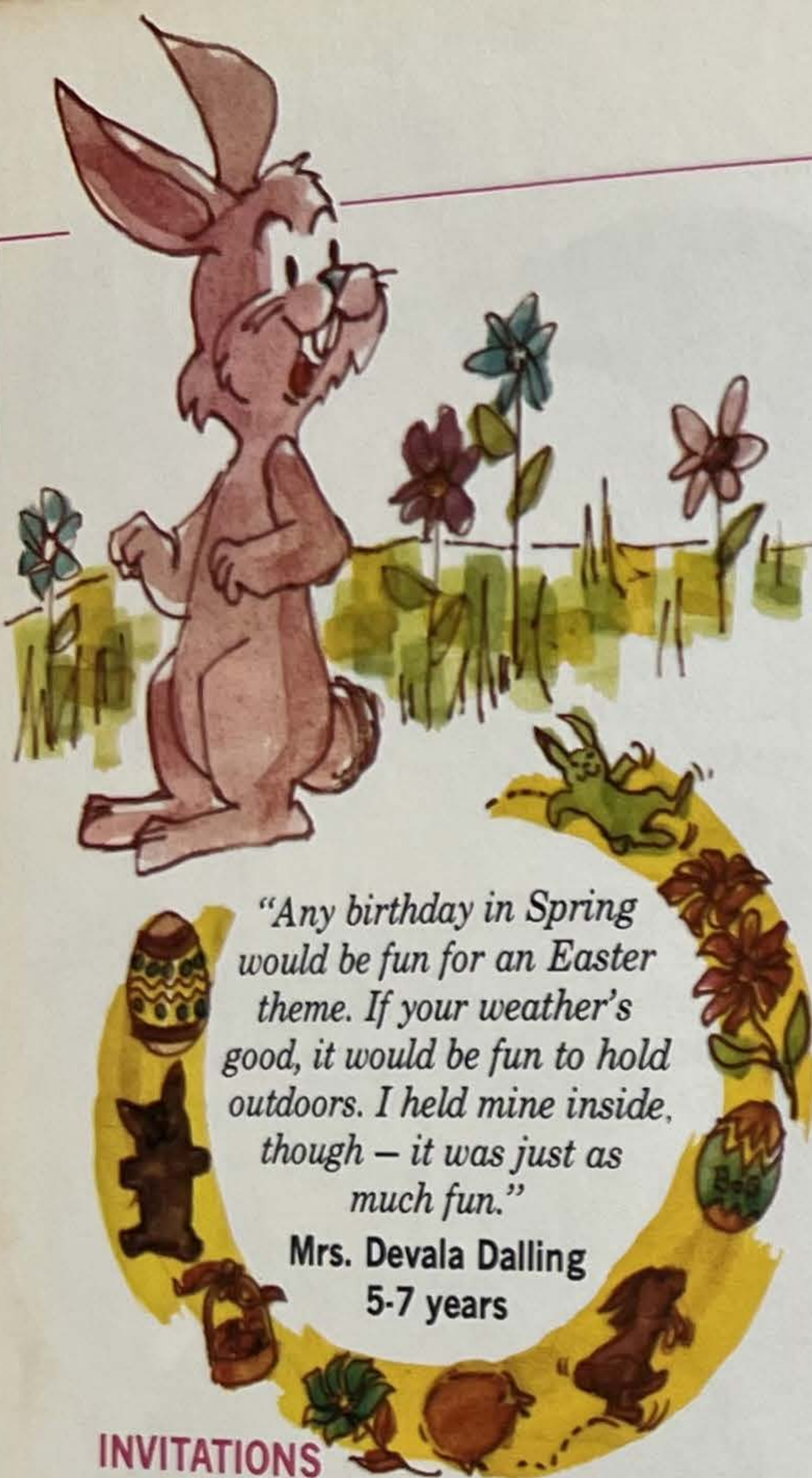
INVITATIONS

You can easily make your own, of course, but the stores have such a wide variety for a Halloween theme, we usually buy them with the paper tablecloth, plates, cups and napkins.



DECORATIONS

Again, the stores are loaded with all kinds of Halloween decoration, so you can be as simple or elaborate as you like. For a centerpiece on the table, I hollowed out a fresh



INVITATIONS

You can send out little "Easter Eggs" of colored paper with the information written on the back. These fit nicely into small envelopes. Something I thought of after I had sent out my invitations was that I could have sent real Easter eggs out, with the time, place, etc. done in felt-tip marking pen. They would have to be hand delivered of course, but that's half the fun for a birthday child.



DECORATIONS

If you love to make things like I do, fashion an Easter bunny out of plastic bags (from

Easter

the cleaners) and an empty Clorox bottle (the white plastic kind). Put the bunny in



the center of a table covered with a paper Easter tablecloth and matching napkins (available at the dime store).

Sugar eggs at each place are a real thrill for each little guest, if you can afford them; otherwise, one or two in the table's center would be fun for them all to share and peek through the window.



Then I made two little chickens out of glass brandy snifters and yellow feather fluff. The fluff and eyes can be bought at novelty stores. Glue the feathers on, give each chicken a little net hat with a bow and flower on it, and the children will love them. You certainly don't *have* to do this, but it does add to the party, I think. For placecards, fill plastic eggs with candy and write the child's name on it with magic marker.

ACTIVITIES

Very simple games are always best for this age group. And the more familiar the better. You could start with "Drop the Handkerchief" (only we said "I have a little bunny and he won't bite you . . ."). Then "London Bridge."



Next a "Dress-up Relay." Two teams are formed and then one child from each team races to the other end of the room where you have two piles of dress-up clothes. The first girl on each side puts on *all* the clothes and then takes them off again before running back to her team and letting the next runner go. The first team through wins.



And finally, "Gloves with Gum." Give everyone a stick of gum. Don't let anyone open it, yet. Then each contestant has to put on a pair of little gloves (or you could use those small plastic sandwich bags) and

Time

open the gum and chew it. Time each contestant, and the one who can do this the fastest wins. This makes them all giggle. I think they like this game best of all. (Besides, they all got some gum!)

REFRESHMENTS

To make a Bunny cake, ice a large loaf cake in white, and then cover it with coconut, to make it look fuzzy. An extra cupcake forms the head and then add pink ears. (Cut the ears from lightweight cardboard then ice in pink.) Add five candles on his



back, and there you have a birthday bunny cake. I didn't cut the cake at the party but made each guest a little cupcake Easter basket, with a pipe cleaner for a handle and green coconut for grass, and a jelly bean or two for eggs. Serve with ice cream cones, and glasses of water. Children always ask for water with ice cream and cake, so you might just as well plan on it.

The whole party cost me very little because I made so much myself!



Cub Scout "Circle of Friendship"

ship." You can make little scouts from old-fashioned, round-head clothes pins. Their arms are pipe cleaners, wrapped once around each pin. "Dress" the Scouts in navy blue and gold crepe paper. Bend one arm to form a salute and extend the other arm forward



to the center of the circle. To create the circle, tie thread from arm to arm. A foil covered pie tin (turned upside down) makes a sturdy base. Scotch tape the Scouts on their silver circle so they don't fall down.



I covered my eating table with yellow crepe paper, although you can probably buy a yellow paper cloth at the dime store. To carry out the theme, run strips of navy crepe paper from one corner of the table to the opposite plus a vertical and a horizontal strip to give you a "spoke" effect. The center-

piece goes in the center and in front of each place I made a placecard replica of the Scout's badge rank in the pack. If Johnny had his Bear, then he received a paper Bear with his name on it. (I suggest you consult the den mother for the ranks since your son's memory may be a little shaky on this.)



For favors how about a pie — only not a regular pie. I always save those frozen pie tins, so I filled one for each guest with the kind of things my son collects — gum, erasers, penny candy, rubber bands, pencil sharpeners and so on. Cover each tin with brown paper and tape it.

ACTIVITIES

Boys this age are apt to be a little rowdy, so if you can possibly hold the activities outdoors, I'd recommend it. We couldn't and so I arranged an indoor treasure hunt. The treasure was a 25¢ bag of candy which I put high up on a closet shelf and then read the first clue: "I'm brown and square. Look under me in the living room for the next clue."

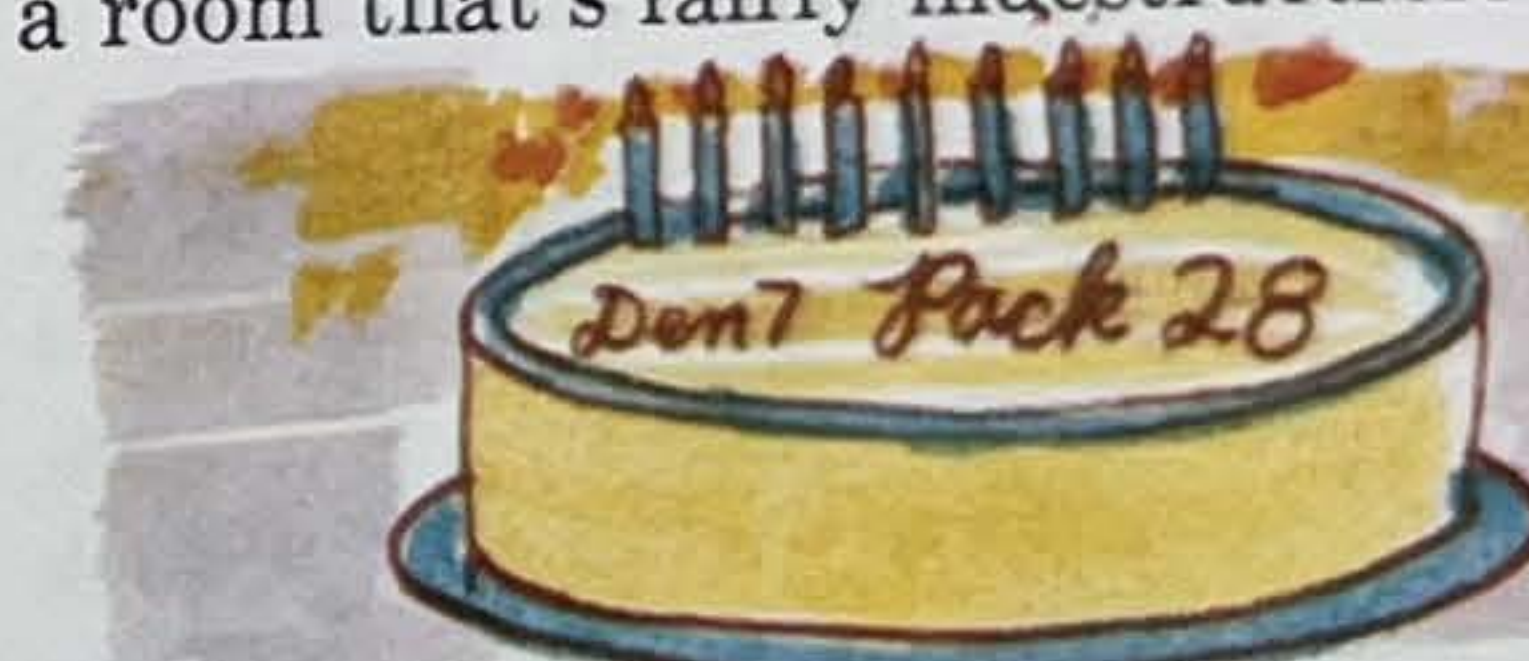
(If you don't specify the room, you'll have the Scouts all over the house where you can't watch them, and you might even have one

boy find the treasure out of order as I did.) If there's only one treasure, pin a note to it asking him to share with the other Scouts.



Boys this age will think "Pin the Tail on the Donkey" is too babyish, but ours enjoyed "pinning the badge on the Cub Scout."

Bingo is another good game for boys this age, and best of all, you can decide how long it should last. While you get the refreshments on, let them play ring toss, if you have a room that's fairly indestructible.



REFRESHMENTS

Carry out the blue and yellow theme with a birthday cake frosted in yellow, blue candles and blue numbers for the pack and den. Though the boys were hungry, they did notice and that's something. I made my son's favorite cookies, too, and passed them, along with ice cream and lots of canned soda pop. Their favorite thing seemed to be the Scout badges on the table, which they argued about in identifying. My favorite thing was the quiet after it was over. On second thought, it was when my son said: "That was a neat party, Mom. Thanks."

"Boys this age are quite proud of being a Cub Scout. This natural pride of membership makes a Cub Scout theme fun for boys from 8-11."

Mrs. Ruth Townsend
8-11 years

INVITATIONS

Consulting your son's Cub Scout Handbook, you'll find pictures of the Bear, Lion, Wolf and Webelo emblem to draw on each corner of a 5¢ postcard. Connect the emblems with footprints to make a border. In the center print usual information (date, time and place) and ask the boys to wear their Cub Scout uniforms.



DECORATIONS

The centerpiece for your table is a natural: The Cub Scout "Living Circle of Friend-



"There are two reasons why this party is good: it's colorful and offers the children something different in the way of food, atmosphere and entertainment."

Mrs. Mack Sumner
4-7 years

INVITATIONS

"Sombreros" cut from brightly colored construction paper, make interesting invitations. Party details are written on the back with something lively like "Ole" on the front.



DECORATIONS

I find it best to decorate the room where the children will be eating. Strips of red, yellow, and orange crepe paper hung from the light above our dining room table set

the mood along with many balloons of different colors. In the doorway I hung a pínata (available at most local novelty stores) filled with candy and small toys from the dime store. (This has to hang securely, so I nailed the twine holding it into the top of the door frame.)



ACTIVITIES

Explain to the children that Mexican children celebrate their birthdays by breaking a pínata. Let each have a turn trying to hit the pínata and break it open. Mexican children have to do it blindfolded, but if your child is four, I'm willing to predict he won't let you blindfold him. If he and his friends are six or seven, they'll join right in and love the blindfold part. Either way, they love this part of the party, and take turns and cheer each other on.



When the pínata breaks, there is a scramble for the toys and candy. I found a good way to avoid the tears that may follow if

one child gets less than another because he doesn't fight as hard, is to simply announce brightly that the next game is on, and it's really a good one.

A hunt for "Mexican jumping beans." Each child gets a little plastic sandwich bag and is told to look for hidden peanuts (if the weather is nice — outside, if not — in the



living room). Perhaps you could help the ones who lost out in the pínata game to find the most peanuts and then award prizes to the ones who find the most peanuts.



Small children love to make things, so how about a Mexican Serape? Cut a neck hole in the closed end of a large grocery sack, and arm holes in two sides. Give one to each child and turn him loose to decorate his own.

You'll need crayons, cut strips of crepe paper for fringe and anything else you have in good supply.

Now it's time for the gift-opening. Then a reading of *Ferdinand The Bull*, to settle the little ones down before refreshments.

REFRESHMENTS

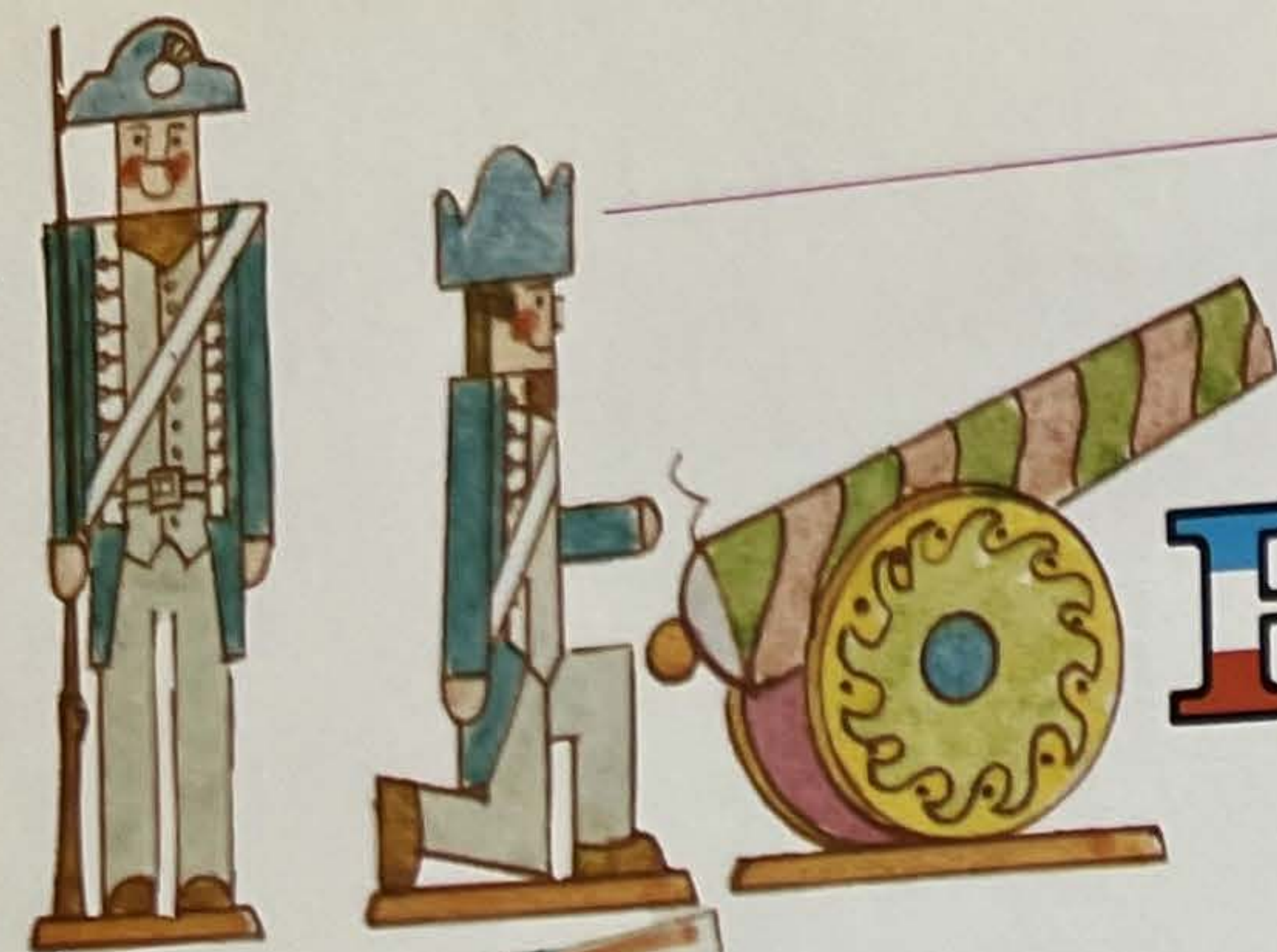
Very few young children like *hot* Mexican food, so I suggest you improvise a little with:

Burritos (really Sloppy Joes) and
Tostados (really corn chips) and
Fiesta cup cakes

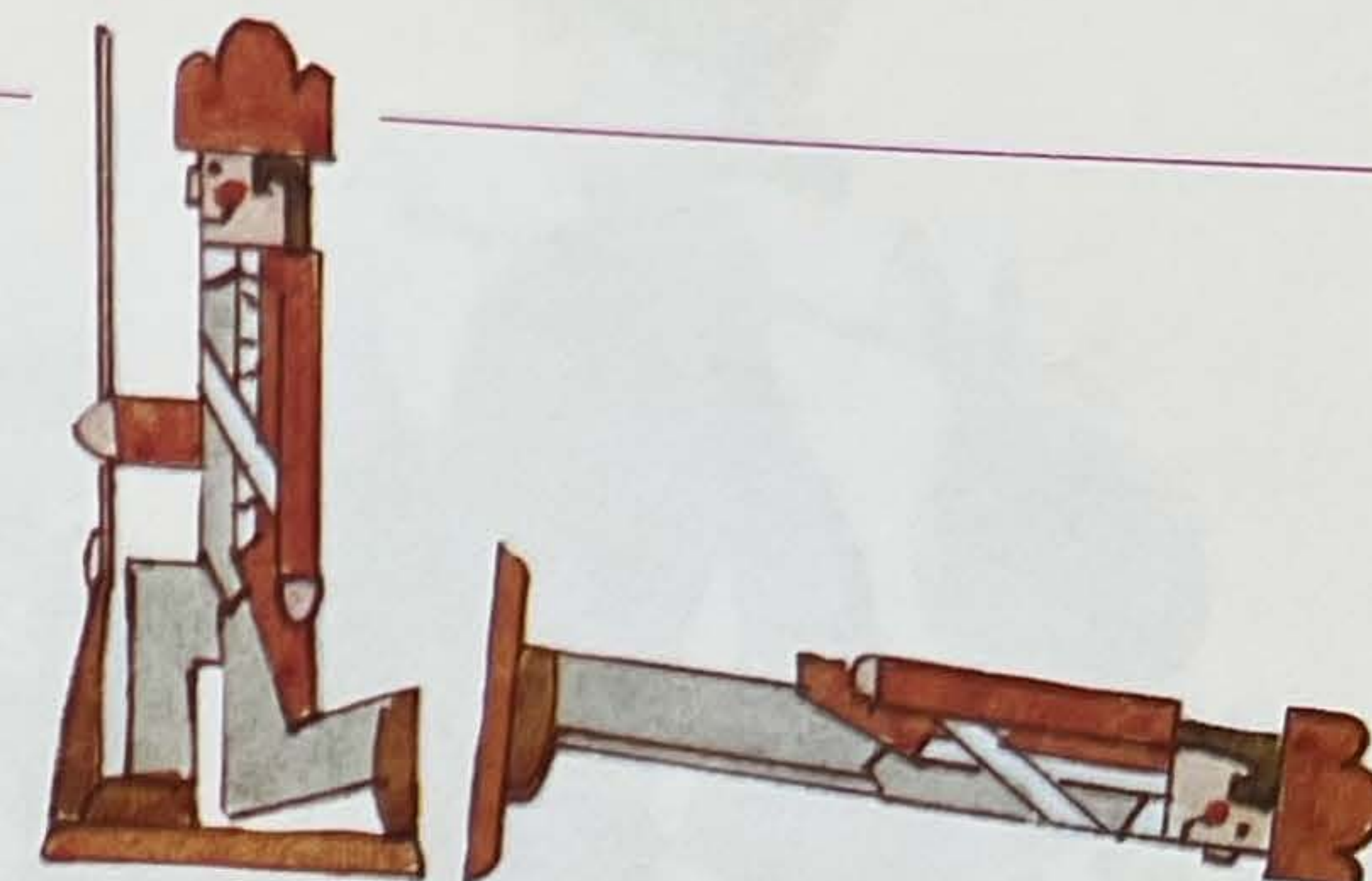


(Put one bottle's worth of that confetti-looking cake decor into your cake batter.) In the icing add bright yellow food coloring, or just do chocolate or white icing, then sprinkle confetti on each cup cake and put a candle in each. This way each child gets to blow out his own candle.

P.S. It just occurred to me that if you do this in summer in good weather, it's all perfect for outdoors, and you could hang your pínata from a tree!

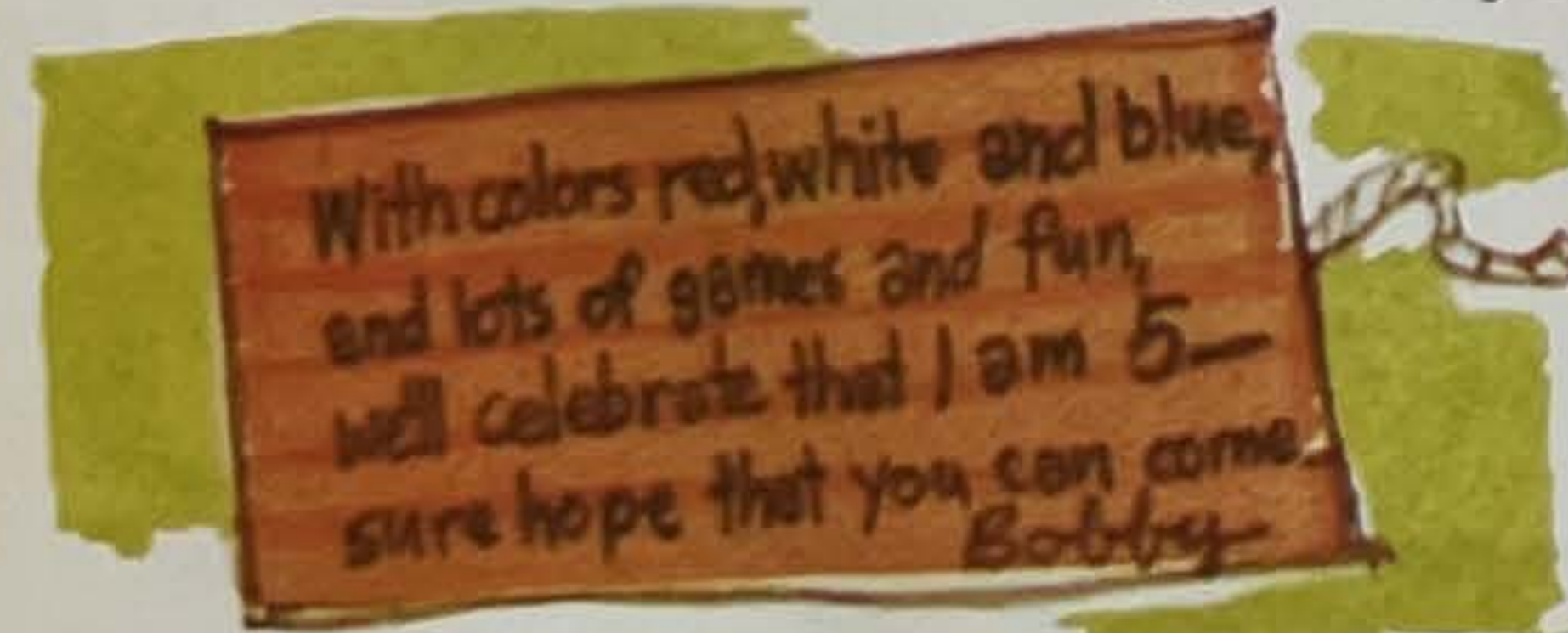


FOURTH OF JULY



INVITATIONS

Cut red construction paper into the shape of a firecracker and attach white string at the top for a fuse. On the firecracker, write: "With colors red, white and blue, and lots of games and fun, we'll celebrate that I am 5 (or whatever) — sure hope that you



can come." Then write the child's name, time, and place. Since my little girl was turning five, I invited four guests, so there would be five at the party. But you could have several more if you want, and it should all go well.

DECORATIONS

In July, it's fun to have the party outside if you can. I decorated our redwood table with red, white and blue crepe paper in thick strips as a tablecloth, then used red paper napkins, plates and cups, but this color



scheme is so flexible that you could use anything in red, white and blue for your table. I didn't do much more than the table, as I don't think five-year-olds notice it too much.

ACTIVITIES

Hide a balloon for each guest somewhere in your house or garden. Each child must find a balloon, try to blow it up (some can't do this, so don't push this point too hard), and bring it to the hostess. The first child to present her balloon to her hostess wins.



Then you can "Pin the tail (cord or string) on the firecracker (red crepe paper taped on a wall)."

And as a quiet game, I think it's fun to give them each a page from an old calendar, and a bunch of red, white and blue stick-um

		★	☆	★	★	☆
★	★	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

stars. Make them race to see who can finish pasting a star over each day the fastest and the neatest. It sounds too simple a game, but five-year-olds like it. They get very confused with too complicated races.

The last game on the list is "Mama says." It's exactly like Simon Says, only five-year olds understand it better. I've noticed that the difficult thing about Simon Says for this age group is that they never get quite clear

MAMA SAYS SIT!



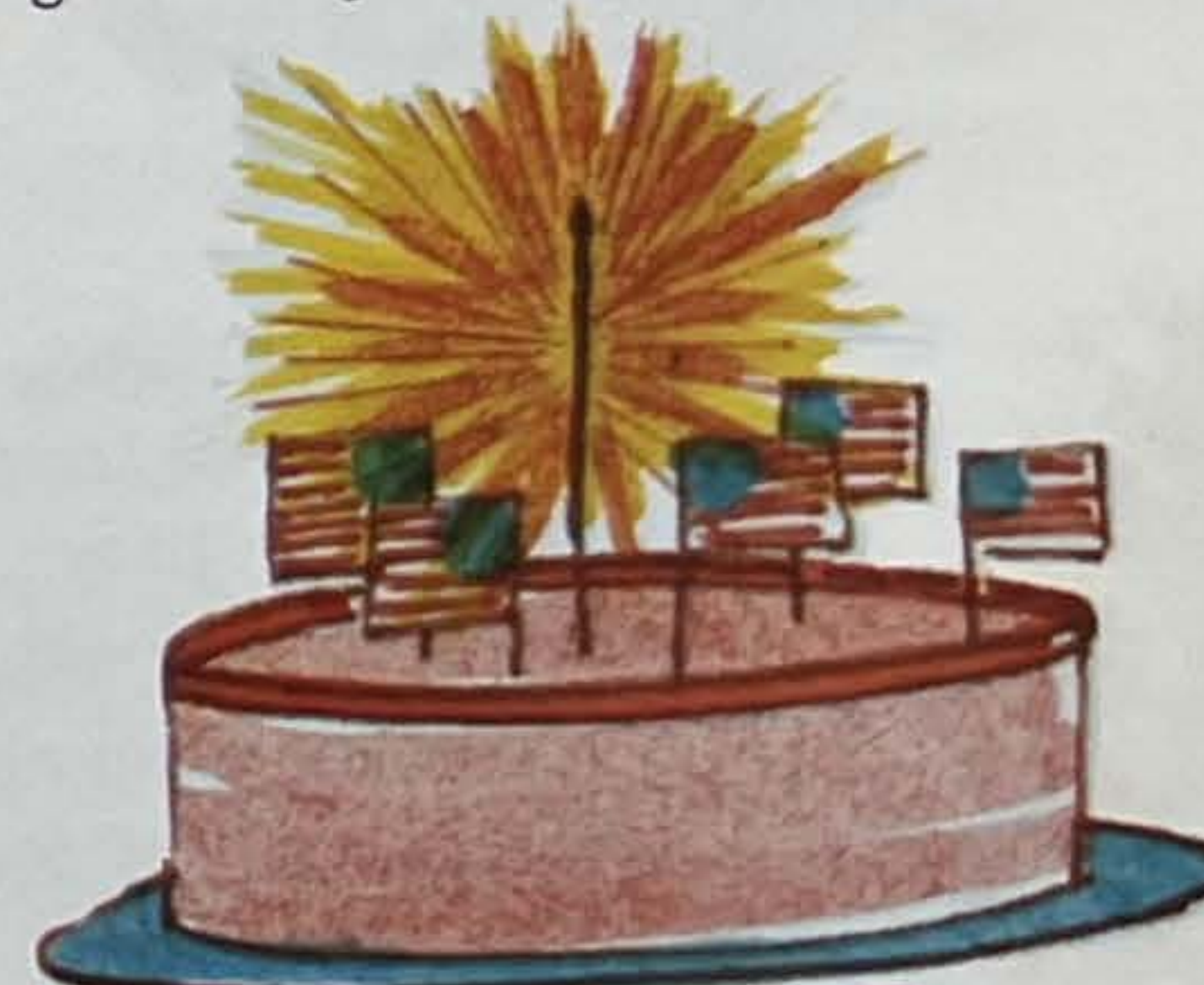
exactly who *Simon* is. So we changed it to be "Mamma" says, and then they got the point: That whenever Mamma says "Sit down" or Mamma says "Clap your hands" you do it — but if she gives a command with-

out saying "Mamma says" first, you must not do it, or you're out of the game. Last one left wins. I, of course, was Mamma. It's all logical to them that way.

REFRESHMENTS

To an ordinary white angel food cake add red, white and blue food coloring for a marble effect on its icing. Serve vanilla ice cream and red Kool-Aid.

The party I had was a great success, and one of the nicest things about it was that it only cost me a little over three dollars for four girls. If you wanted to spend a little



more, you could do a birthday cake with little American flags sticking up from the icing. And then I thought that maybe it would be fun to have sparklers on the cake instead of candles. You probably would want only one sparkler instead of five, though. And you could wrap up favors for each guest in the left-over red, white and blue crepe paper, so that each could have a gift to play with while the birthday child opens her things. And real little American flags for their tricycles or bedrooms are good favors.



Hobo Party

DECORATIONS

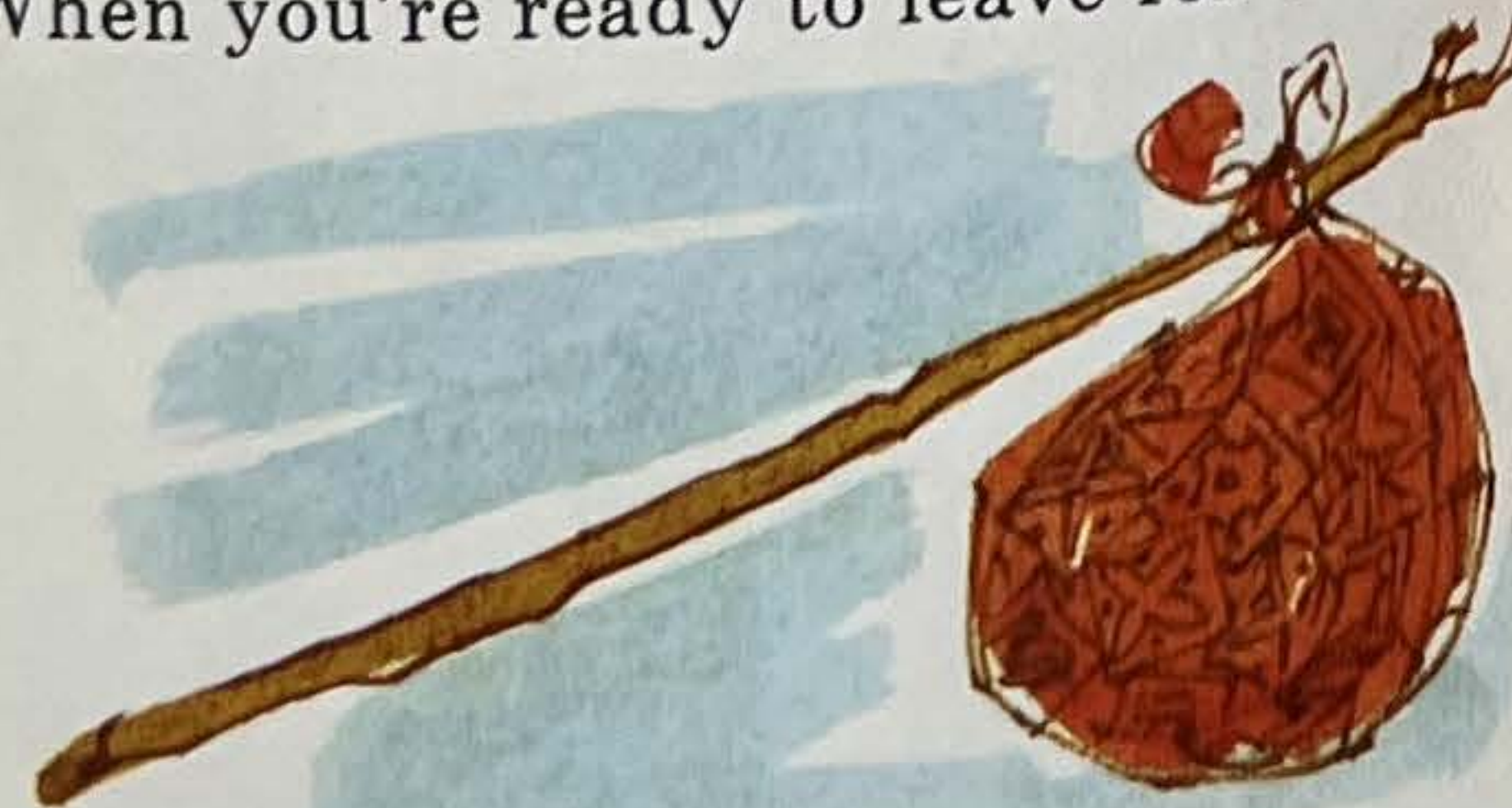
Absolutely none. Boys aged 8 to 11 don't seem to have much interest in decorations—so why the work and expense? Besides, the



great outdoors is decoration enough. Some boys like to come in hobo costumes; others look like hobos all the time anyway—so they can come in their normal clothes.

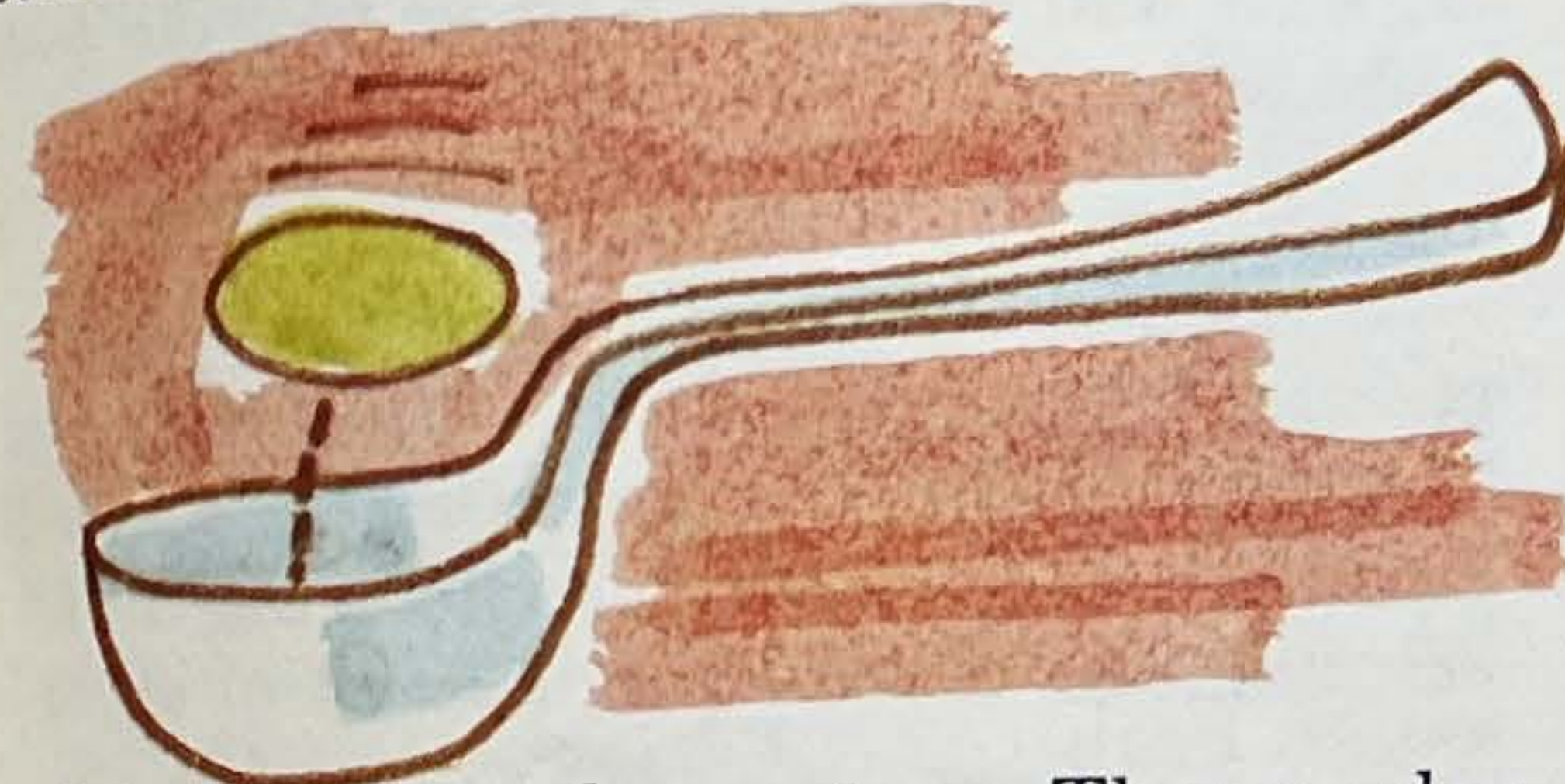
ACTIVITIES

Have the party gather at your house. You'll want a baseball or football out in the front yard to play with while everyone arrives. When you're ready to leave for the park,



give each child his "Bindle-Stick" with a red checkered bandana attached (Hobos use this for all their worldly possessions). Inside it is the birthday dinner, and it can also be a favor.

Boys will usually want to play something strenuous upon arriving at the park. Base-



ball is easy enough to set up. Then a relay race with two teams carrying lima beans on a spoon.

Then it's time to eat, for they'll be hungry. They can open their satchels and dig into their dinners, and have the dessert you've brought for them.



To make them sit still for awhile after eating, you can have a story-telling contest based on the theme, "If I went out to seek my fortune, I would..." For the most unusual story, a prize can be given. The best way to judge, I think, is to have the boys vote on it themselves. Secret ballot is a diplomatic way of doing it, and saves a lot of kicking and punching... (I noticed that most of the boys voted for their own story, so you might suggest that they vote for *two*).

After this, you can have the birthday child open his presents, which you've brought down to the park with you, and the wrappings can all go in the nearby trash can, saving you all that dumping at home.

By this time, it's time to go home, for even with daylight saving time it should be beginning to get dark. The boys can all walk home to your house together, or you can drop them off from your car as you drive to their homes.



REFRESHMENTS

Into each bandana, which went on the "bindle-stick," tie: a sandwich, a small carton of milk, two straws, a banana or apple, a candy bar, and a noisemaker. Then put the birthday cake, some paper plates and napkins, and the presents, all in your car to take with you to the park. After the main course, you can light the candles and serve the cake to them right there. The bandanas and sticks can go home with each guest, and I noticed that my little guests used them on many days after the party. It's a great party for these boys, and you could do it up one of our beautiful canyons, too, where you might even be able to have a bonfire... (If you try this version, you'll be tempted to go "Hobo" all the way and have baked beans in cans. I doubt the boys will thank you for it.)

"With my hard-playing, rough-and-tumble boys, I decided to join 'em instead of fight 'em. I had what they appreciated most—a hobo party!"

Mrs. M. Romander
8-11 years

INVITATIONS

You can write these on anything, but a soup can label sets a good note for the party. The poem I wrote was, "Come to my hobo party—we'll tramp around in the park, have a little handout, and be home before dark."



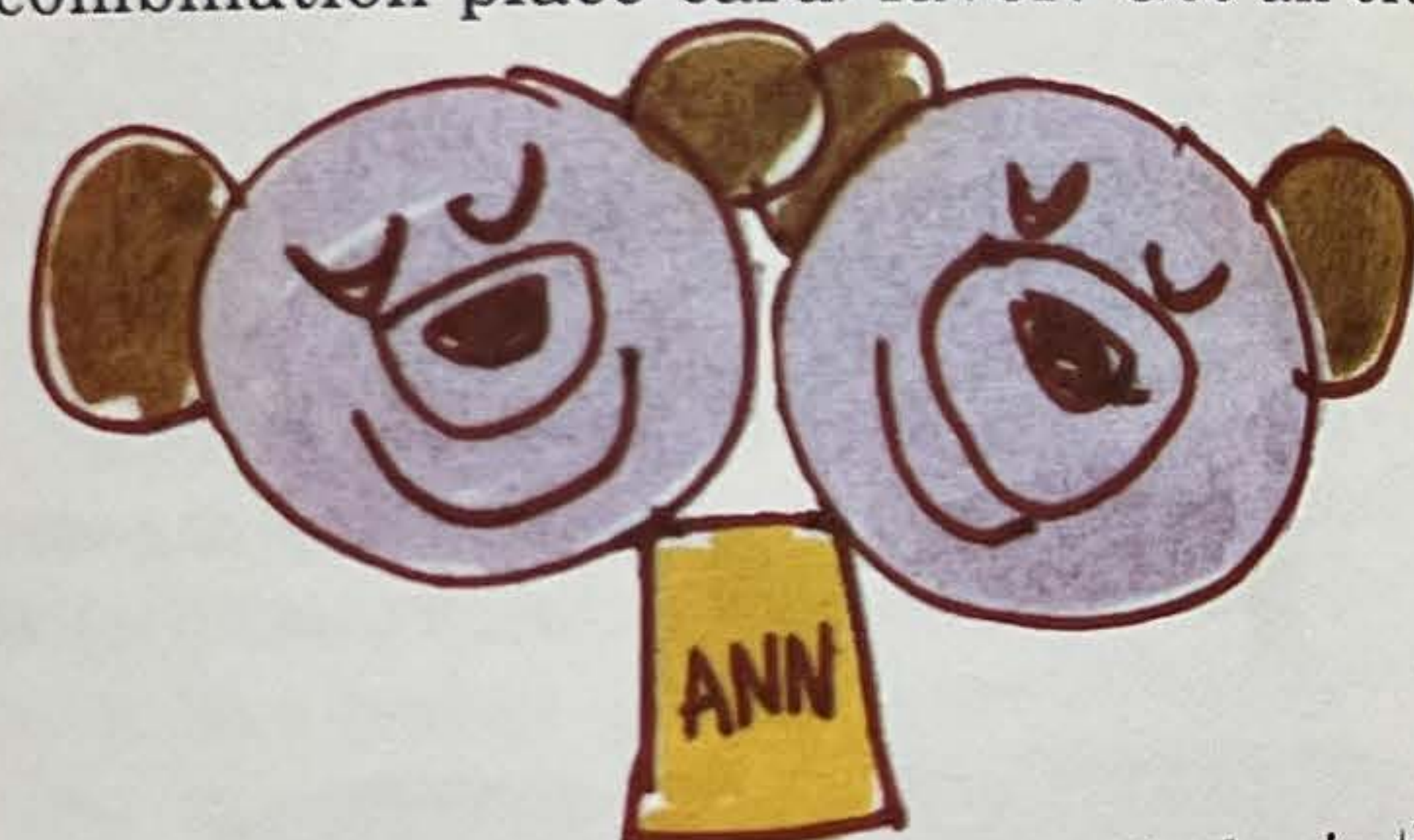
Then I wrote the meeting time and place—our house, 5:00 on a summer evening, but you could certainly do this in spring or fall if the weather holds for you. (One can always go down to the basement if spring or fall suddenly turns fickle on you.)



HAPPINESS IS A TEDDY BEAR

will have chewed off ears, some may be missing eyes and ears, but a three year old over-looks a lot.

If your hunt is successful you'll have enough to place all around the living room. If not, settle for the room where you eat. To continue the theme for the table make a combination place-card/favor: Get an ordi-



nary paper cup and punch two holes in the bottom. Through each hole, slip the knot of a small inflated balloon. Turn the cup upside down, so the two balloons are resting on the cup.

A felt tip pen is all you need to draw a bear face on the balloon. Then cut ears from brown construction paper, add the guest's name to the paper cup and that's all there is to it. A take-home favor, and a place-card in one.

If your kitchen is large, here's another idea that I guarantee boys and girls will enjoy: let them make and decorate their own gingerbread men. You need some small bowls with assorted gum drops, cinnamon candies and raisins for decorations. Begin by letting the children knead the dough and pound it

hard to a thickness of about 1/2 inch. A cookie cutter makes the shape and each can



decorate his own — to take home or to eat as his birthday treat. All gingerbread recipes won't work equally well. This one I can recommend:

Simmer for 15 minutes:

1 c. molasses 1 c. shortening

Cream together:

1 c. sugar 1 egg
1 t. vanilla

Dissolve 2 tsps. baking soda in 1/2 c. hot water. Add hot water and soda to egg and sugar mixture

Sift:

6 c. flour 1/2 t. cloves
1 t. cinnamon 1 t. salt
1 t. ginger

Pat on piece of wax paper. Then cut with cookie cutter and decorate. Bake 10 min. @ 375°. Yield: About 20



While the gingerbread bears are baking, we play the bean bag game.

By now you're so good at drawing bears, you might go right on and draw some more — a large one on cardboard with a hole cut in the stomach which makes a suitable target for the bean bag game. (If you want to go all the way and keep the youngsters occupied, let them make their own bean bags. You'll have to cut the bear shapes, but the pre-schoolers will enjoy filling them with beans and stapling them closed. Let them keep the bags as another take-home favor).

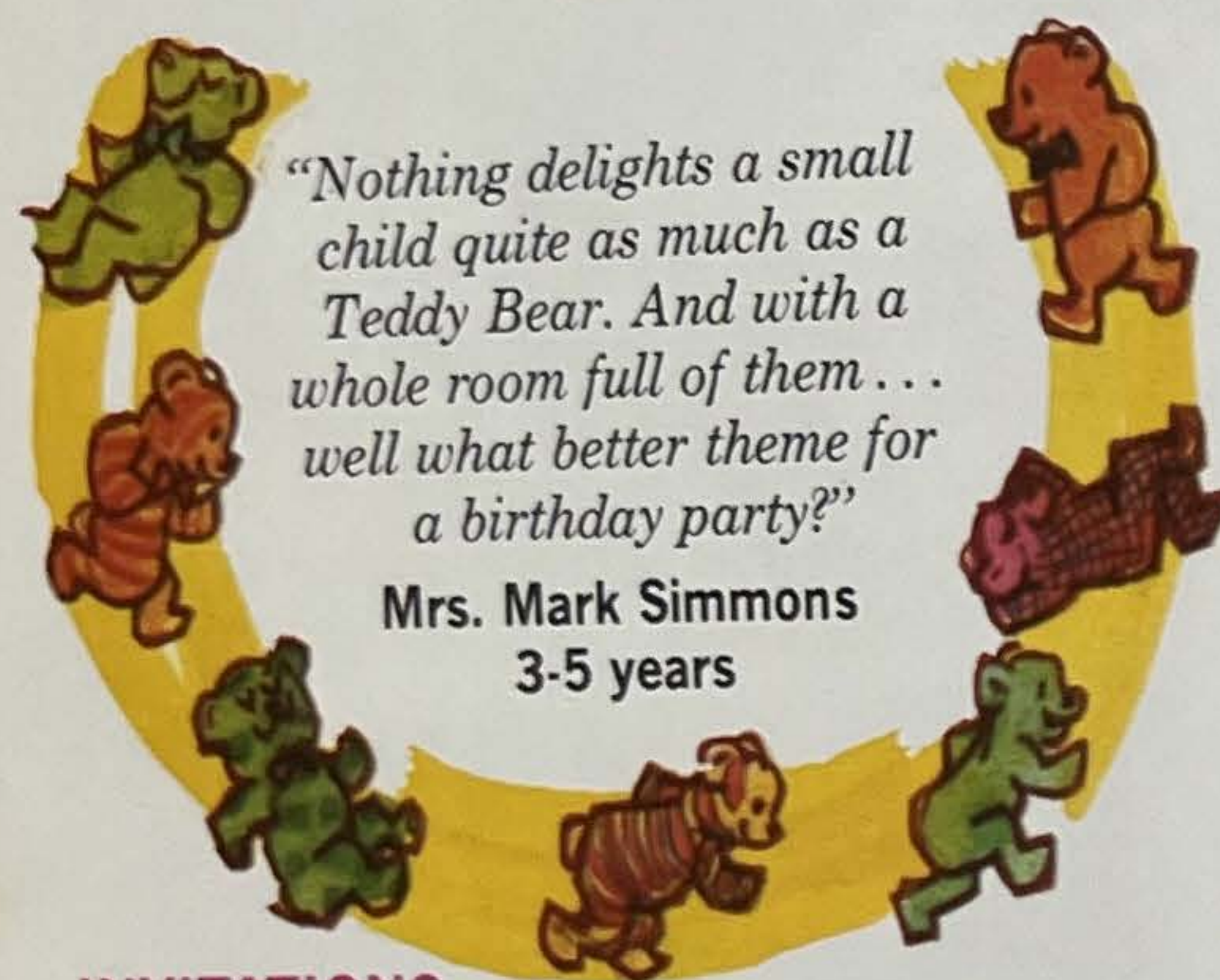
Another game that will be enjoyed by all is "Bag the Bear." This is played in the same manner as drop-the-handkerchief with the bear replacing the handkerchief, and using the words "I have a little bear and he won't hug you, etc."

REFRESHMENTS

If you make the gingerbread men, all you need is an ice cream cone and a little punch. If you prefer to make a cake, make a plain



one and decorate the ice cream instead: Shape ice cream into a ball, or better yet, use a round scoop. Vanilla wafers make perfect bears' ears, and cinnamon candies and raisins or gum drops complete the face. (This will be easier on you; they can be made ahead of time and put in the freezer.)



"Nothing delights a small child quite as much as a Teddy Bear. And with a whole room full of them... well what better theme for a birthday party?"

Mrs. Mark Simmons
3-5 years

INVITATIONS

Set the stage with a Teddy Bear invitation which you make by drawing one and cutting it out of brown construction paper.



I wrote "Happiness is a Teddy Bear" on one side and continued "and a birthday party" on the other along with the information essentials.

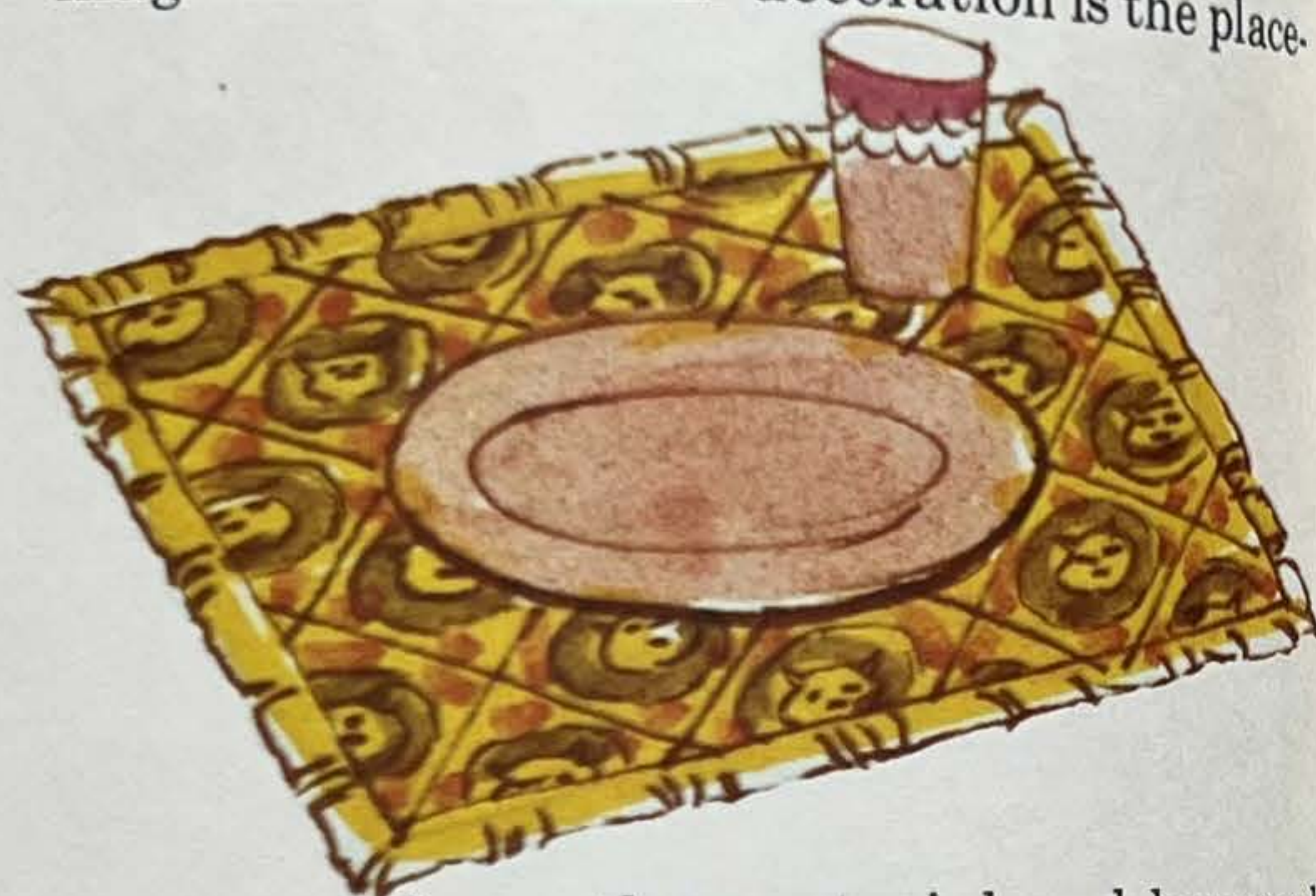
DECORATIONS

Borrow your decorations by rounding up as many Teddy Bears as you can find in the neighborhood or your own basement. Some



The Lion's Den

throughout the house, if you want, with bits of the yardage or matching pictures cut from magazines. The main decoration is the place-



mat, cut from the material and hemmed with fringe which can be used again for other parties, or just for fun.



You can cover small boxes (jewelry boxes or even match boxes) with the material (Elmer's glue works wonders). Mine, when finished, looked like little lions' cages because of the yellow and white striped material. Then fill the little boxes with animal crackers.

ACTIVITIES

The games can all be adjusted to the "lion" theme, such as: "Feed the Lion." This

can be a large box with a lion's head drawn on it, and little bean bags (again made from



the material) can be thrown through the lion's mouth, which is cut as a hole in the box.

"Who Will the Lion Bite?" You can use one of those "time bombs" which will click at different times, and the child holding the time bomb when it clicks is the one whom the lion bit. (They sit in a circle to do this and pass it quickly from one to another until it clicks). Five-year olds love this game, and squeal and laugh all through it. Finally, the lion "bites" them all but one, who wins.



Relay races are always good for this age. I think it's best to award prizes *here* because a whole team can win. If you have time, you can have two races and hope different teams win — but to be on the safe side so that everyone gets a prize, you could have prizes for the winners and booby prizes for the losers of one race. I like to make sure everyone is happy with a 10¢ prize for each child, if I can work it out.

As for the other activities, I don't try to regulate my party too much. I've found that five-year olds prefer to watch the opening of the presents and then sharing in playing with the new presents. I'm perfectly comfortable to just sit and watch as they create their own fun for the last part of the party.



REFRESHMENTS

These are simple — cake and ice cream and punch. Five-year olds have a short attention span, so eating is apt to be a quick thing with them and they get bored having to sit at a table too long. A gaily decorated cake to simulate a jungle scene, with green-tinted coconut for grass and plastic animals roaming through it looks very good. I'd try to make sure each child gets an animal on his piece of cake.

Then they can eat their animal crackers (I got those cute frosted ones with little dots on them but the plain ones are good, too) or else save them to take home with them. I served my cake and punch from plain blue paper cups and plates, which went nicely with the material.

You know, you may not find my exact lion material, but there might be another cute animal pattern on sale, and you could change the theme, but keep these ideas. And your child loves to watch you make it all yourself!

"The whole idea for this party came from a piece of yardage I found on sale . . . it had stripes and lions all over it, and I cut games, decorations, and the invitations out of this material, which cost 39¢ a yard."

Mrs. Eleanor Hoagland
5-7 years

INVITATIONS

You can make the invitations out of colored paper, with the material cut out and glued on the front. Since this party was for five-year olds, I told them to wear play-clothes, because I think no matter how hard a five-year old tries, he is going to spill things and get pretty messy.



DECORATIONS

If you've found a good juvenile pattern like my lions, you can carry out the theme

St. Patrick's Day

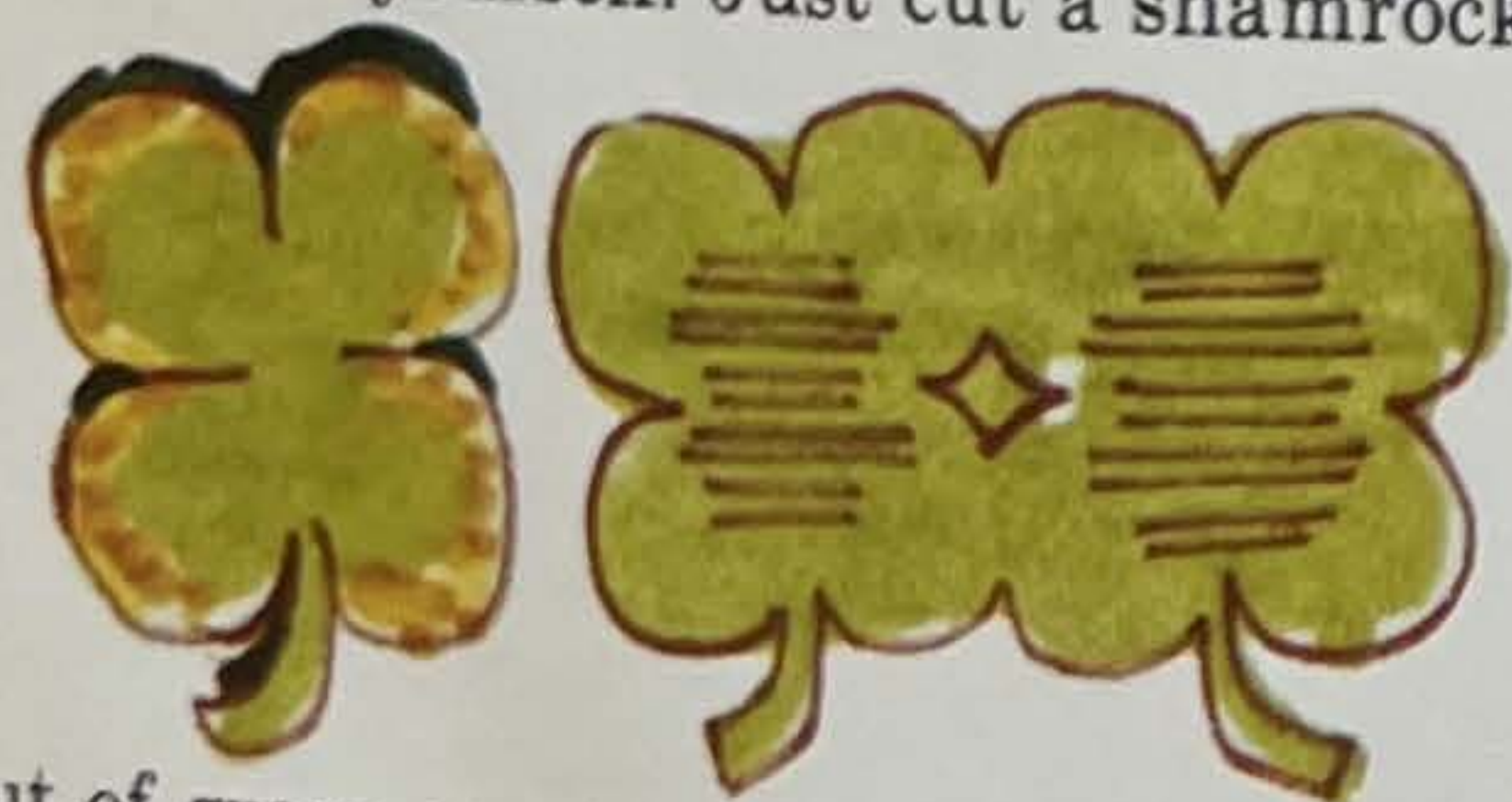


"The luck o' the Irish goes with any birthday party with a St. Paddy's theme. This birthday party is easy with just enough 'make it yourself' projects to make a very special 'do' for the birthday child."

Mrs. Jeanne Welch
5 year olds

INVITATIONS

You can get St. Patrick's Day birthday invitations at any card store, but it's fun to make them yourself. Just cut a shamrock



out of green construction paper. Decorate the edge on both sides with gold glitter sprinkled on to wet glue. White ink makes the invitation look very special.

DECORATIONS

We try to decorate the party room and the table with green, white and gold crepe paper, twisted into streamers. And for good

measure — green and white balloons. (To a 5-year old a party just isn't much of anything without a balloon to take home.) We tie ours in a bunch and give them to the children as they leave the party. Otherwise you're in for a lot of tears and confusion if you give them away too soon. Paper table



cloths, paper cups and plates are available everywhere with Irish design, but a combination of plain green and white will work as well. Use left-over paper from the invitations to cut small shamrocks for the cups and candy cups if you like. Blarney Stone place markers are really different. We gather small flat rocks which we paint white. Add gold glitter before the paint dries.

If the group is small, it's fun to get a snapshot of each guest from his parents well in advance. Attach it to a paper shamrock and tie it to the stone. By each place setting, place a little Irish pipe and a bottle of bubble blowing liquid.

ACTIVITIES

The party starts with a story about Irish customs and rules, which gives the children an appreciation of the party theme and the games that follow. (A book called "Holidays and Customs" published by Bookcraft is an invaluable aid for this segment.) Then on to the games.

1. Kiss the Blarney Stone — an Irish version of Pin The Tail. Draw a map of Ireland



on a large sheet of white paper. The encyclopedia will show you where to locate the Blarney Stone. Blindfold each child and give him a pair of paper lips, cut from red construction paper. Closest one to the Blarney Stone wins.



2. One-Potato - Two-Potato — a natural for the Irish. The children gather in a circle with one child in the center. Put a coin in his hand which he holds out to the other children, as he says, "One potato, two potato, three potato, four. Five potato, six potato, seven potato, more." On each "potato" he faces a different child in the circle. The one he ends on, on "more" get to guess which hand holds the coin. If he guesses correctly he keeps the coin. If not, the child in the center does. The game continues until each child has won a coin.

3. Treasure Hunt. If the weather's nice, you might turn the children loose to hunt for paper shamrocks you've hidden in the



yard. A prize awaits the one who finds the most in a specified time. (I've also tried this in the house and it works fine if you put everything breakable away first and can use more than one room.)

4. St. Paddy's Day Parade. Every child wants to let off steam and they love the ruckus of a march around the yard. Give each child a pan and a spoon and let them yell and beat their "instruments." The children will be much easier to handle later on if you can find one boisterous activity to help relieve their tensions. (I don't recommend this game for the house unless you have nerves of steel.)

REFRESHMENTS

My children seem to like white cake with white frosting best of all. For color I add a gold harp (made from pipe cleaner glittered gold), green gum drops and green candles



and two little porcelain elves. Small children love ice cream cones, so I scoop Lime Sherbet into the cones and make a Leprechaun face with small gum drops. Punch for this party is made with lemon punch mixed with lemon soda, and lime punch ice cubes for color.

After refreshments the children are ready to settle down and open gifts.



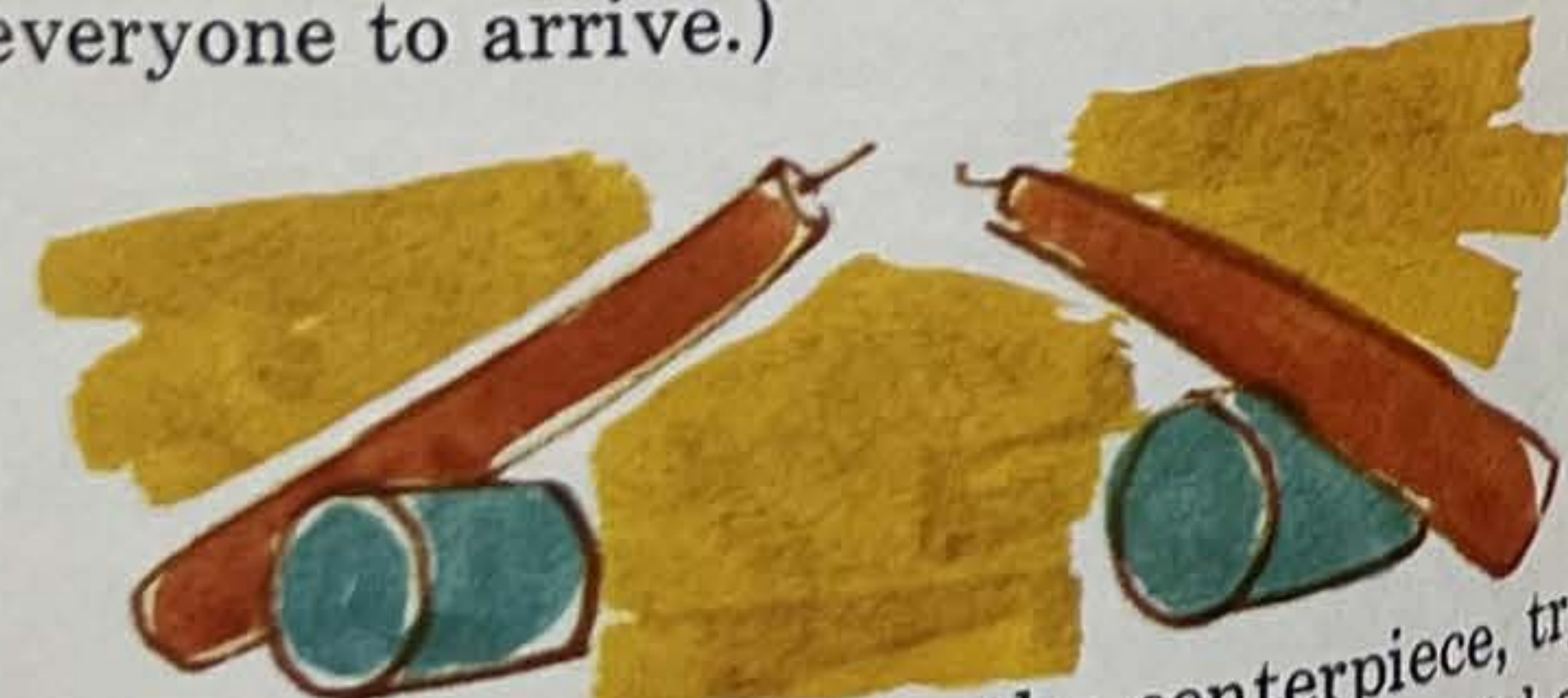
TOY SOLDIERS

personally think simple touches are enough for little boys. Inexpensive cloth yardage in red and white and blue can be laid across a table in three wide bands for the tablecloth.

The centerpiece is easy — it's the cake (double layers baked in round pans), decorated to look like a drum. Those new cake



decorator tubes you can buy in the supermarket help out here. I decorated white icing with red and blue (but you could decorate a red or blue cake, too). For favors, I made little drums out of lids from spray cans, by covering them with felt, rick-rack, and braid. Q-tips glued to the lids make acceptable drum sticks. I added an inexpensive toy bugle as an extra for each place at the table and made soldier hats out of red shelf paper. (Or let the guests make their own while waiting for everyone to arrive.)



If you want to add to the centerpiece, try making your own cannons and place on either side of the cake. Simply cut in half a paper towel tube and cover with the same felt materi-

al used before. Then just place a thin tapered red candle across it, secured by a drop or two of glue.

ACTIVITIES

Try this relay, "Ping Pong Ball Race," if you think the little boys can understand team play. (It's been my experience that they like to be all-out for themselves at this age!) The idea is that each opponent has a ping pong ball, which is placed on the floor at equal



points. The ball must be blown from the starting point to a place across the room. If you play this as an individual game, have the winner from each pair race winners of the others, until you have a final. The child who blows the ball best and beats all opponents wins.

Then each guest turns into a "Bombardier." Give each child a turn to stand or kneel on a chair and drop five old-fashioned wooden clothes pins into an empty wide-mouth mayonnaise jar. The child getting the most pins in the jar wins.

The "Big Bang" gets everyone outside (maybe while the refreshments are being readied). Give each child a medicine bottle

complete with plastic lid. Put a little baking soda in each bottle. Then add a teaspoon or



two of vinegar and quickly put the lid on. The reaction of the soda to the vinegar causes the lid to "pop" off the bottle with a bang. (This could be played at the end of the party while waiting for the mothers to come pick up the children.)

Prizes for these games can be popguns, drums, or flags.

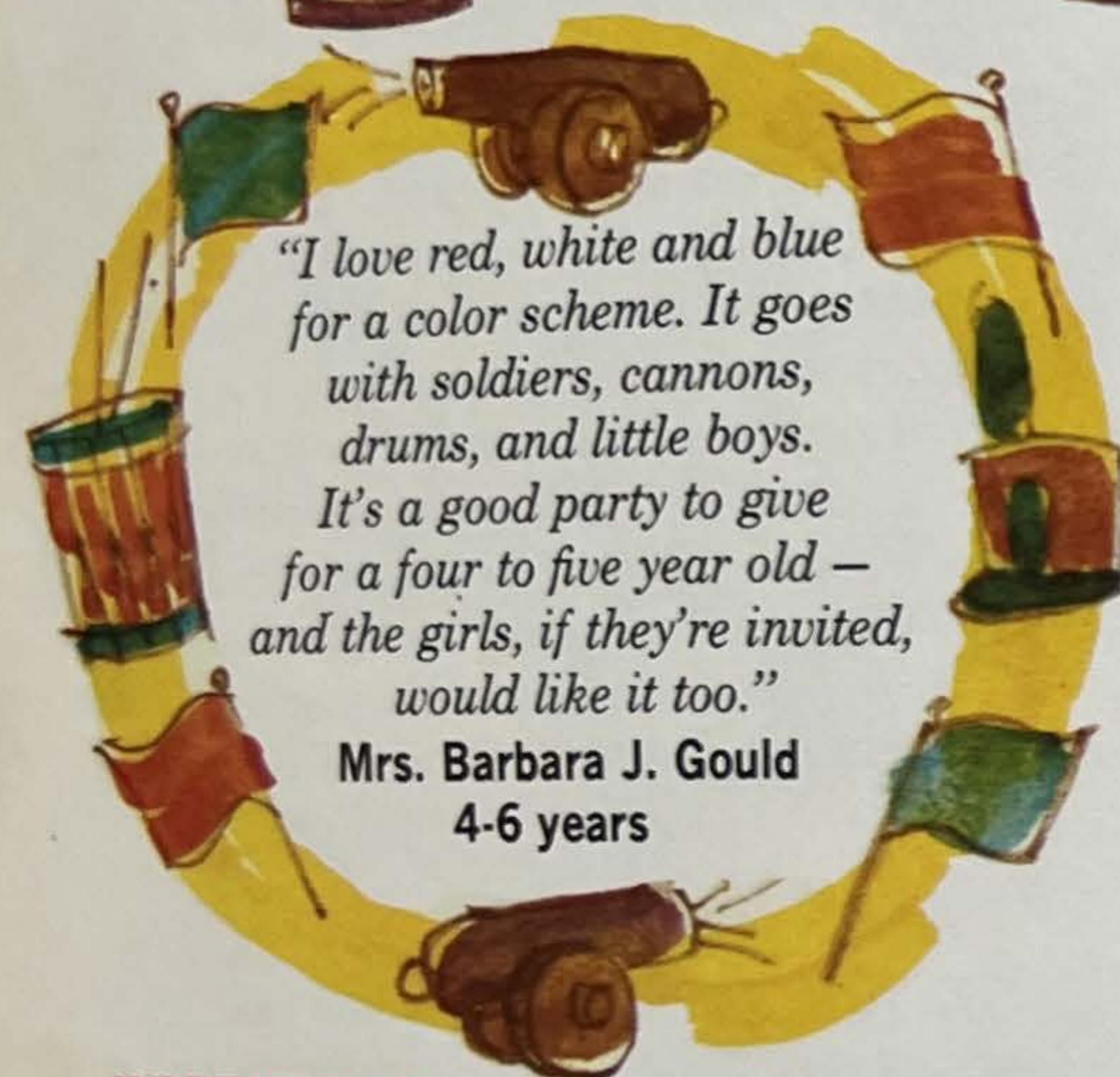
REFRESHMENTS

My little boy loves bean with bacon soup, so I served that with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. But your own child's favorite menu might be best for you.

Of course, the dessert is a slice of the "Drum" cake and ice cream, either strawberry or vanilla. I had plenty of milk to pass around, too.

After refreshments, I think it's a good idea to settle everyone down for a few minutes by opening the presents.

I gave each child a little sack with his name on it for his prizes, favor and "pop" bottle to avoid last minute scrambling.



"I love red, white and blue for a color scheme. It goes with soldiers, cannons, drums, and little boys. It's a good party to give for a four to five year old — and the girls, if they're invited, would like it too."

Mrs. Barbara J. Gould
4-6 years

INVITATIONS

Cut these into the shape of a drum from red or white construction paper. You could do a toy soldier, if you're artistic enough.



Decorate the front with red, white and blue crayon or paper scraps. Write the invitation on the back.

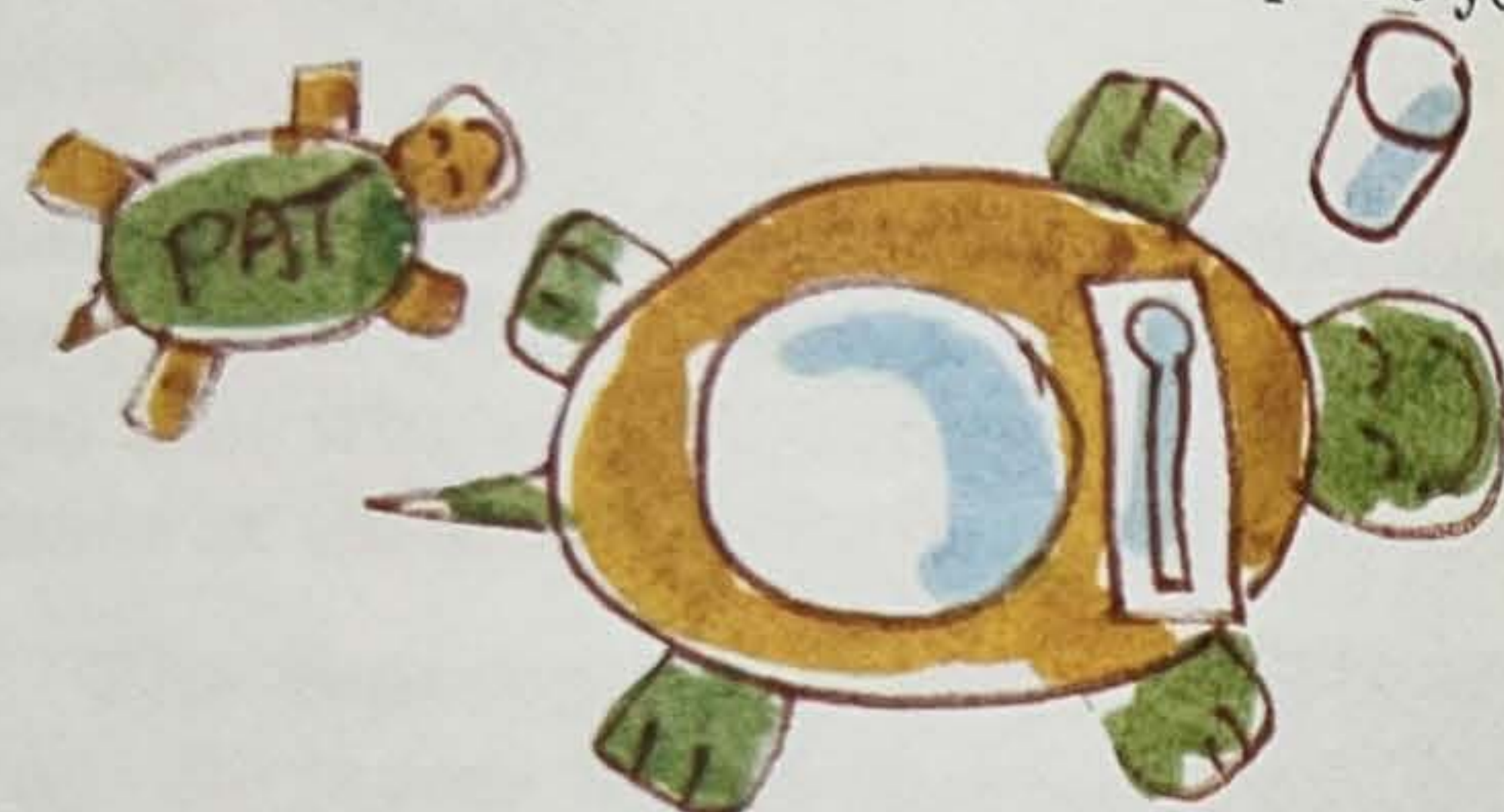
DECORATIONS

There's really no limit to what you can do with a theme like this, from the simplest to the most elaborate you could dream of. I



Turtle Birthday

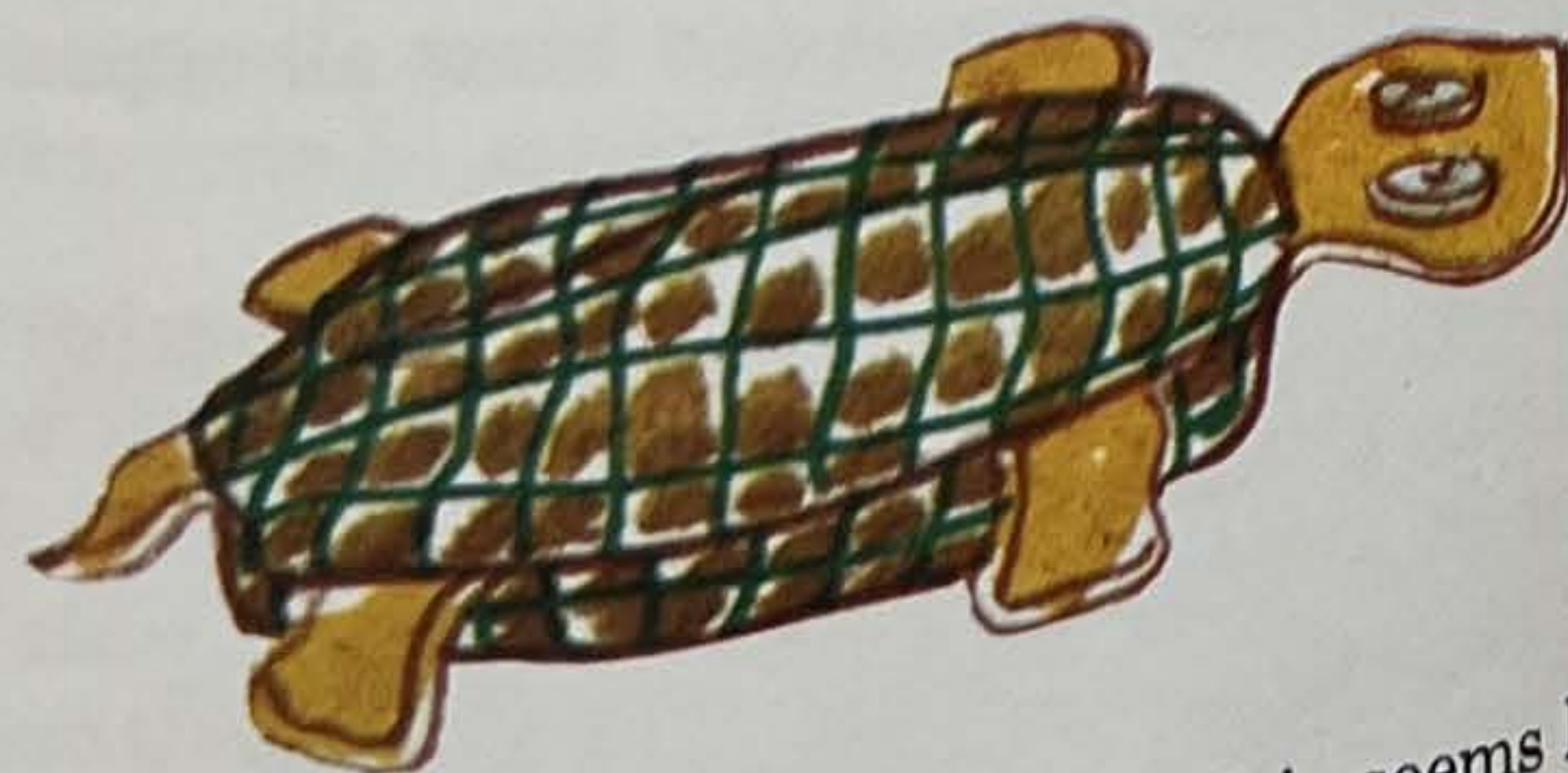
To complete the table I make turtle shaped place mats from the same brown and green paper as the invitations. If you print your



guests' names on the turtle shell, you'll avoid squabbles about who sits where, and the children seem to enjoy hunting for their own names, even if they can't read. If you have the time and patience, you can cut several smaller turtles to decorate a plain paper napkin and the paper nut and candy cups.

ACTIVITIES

A party for five-year olds needs constant direction and change of pace. At our house we begin with a quiet game, "Throw the Turtle In the Pond." We make turtle shaped bean-bags with green and brown material,



using buttons for eyes, but if this seems like too much trouble, any standard bean-bag will do. The pond is a bucket or waste basket and the object is to give each child a limited

number of turns to hit the pond. If you let the children keep the bean-bags, you won't need a special prize for the winner.

An activity game is essential, so we divide our guests into teams for a "Tortoise and the Hare Relay." The children crawl like turtles



to a designated point, then hop like rabbits back. You might try boys against the girls for one relay, then mix the children up for as many rounds as you can take. (Three should be plenty).

You can give prizes to the winners of the activity games if you like, but I've never found this necessary. And unless everyone gets a prize or the same number of prizes, you run the risk of disappointing a child.

Both you and your guests need settling down at this point and what better way than a story. "The Tortoise and The Hare" is a natural and illustrating the story on a flan-



nel board adds interest. The characters can

be made from coloring book cut-outs, or you might find what you need in a toy shop.

After the story, while the children are still sitting down, let your child open his presents. From this point on, the children will entertain themselves until you're ready to serve refreshments.

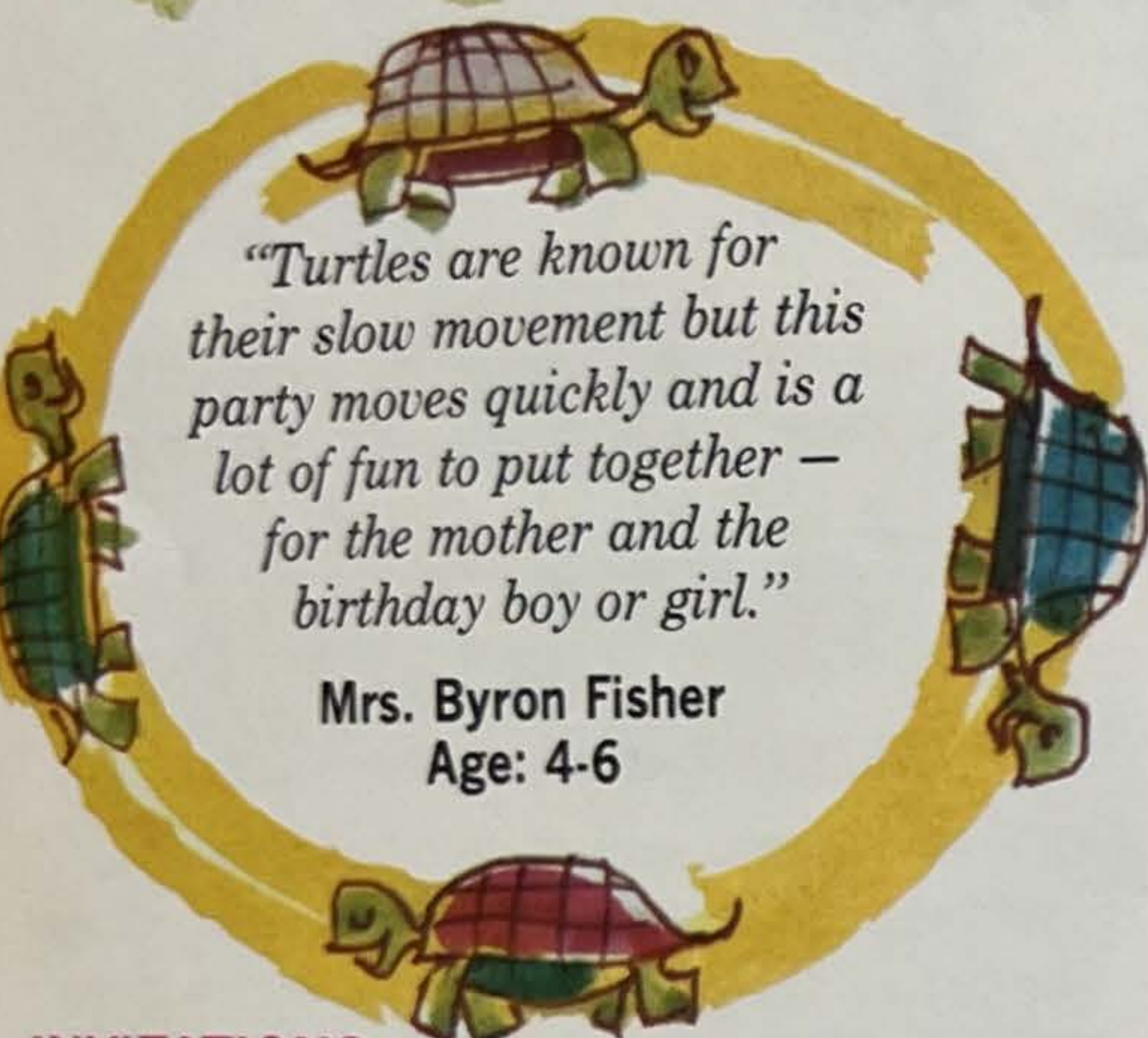
TREATS

The Turtle Cake is always a hit, and it's really not hard at all. I use an angel food pan, and fill the center hole, or you can bake



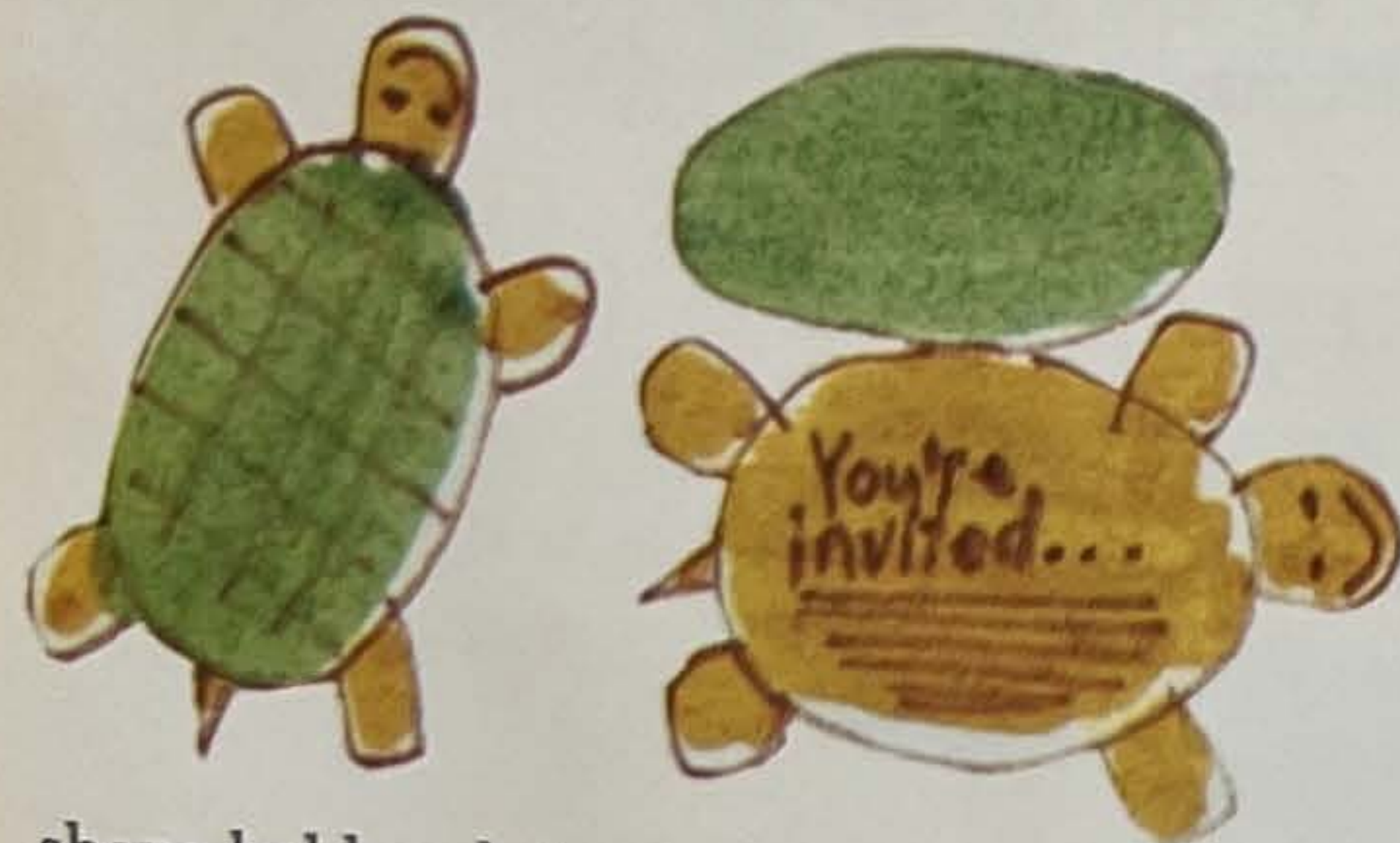
the cake in a mixing bowl. Make a dozen or so cupcakes along with it. You'll need two (cut in half) to make the turtle legs, and two more for the head. Frost the turtle with fluffy chocolate frosting and cover the shell with green tinted coconut. Add a paper hat, if you like, and candles.

Serve with ice cream and punch. (If the cake looks too pretty to eat, or you want to save it for the family later, the party guests will be quite satisfied with their own individual cup cakes.)



INVITATIONS

I like to make the invitations myself, with brown and green colored paper. Keep the



shape bold and simple and let your child do the cutting. Any size is fine if it fits a standard size envelope.

DECORATIONS

I don't decorate the house much, but confine the theme to the table. The birthday cake is the centerpiece and, of course, it's a turtle cake. It's fun for the children because they've never seen one like it.

Birthday Dates to Remember

January

July

February

August

March

September

April

October

May

November

June

December

